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Arab-Israeli Talks

Amman, Tel Aviv End Talks on Opening Embassies

JN0512130594 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jordan and Israel have concluded preparations for opening the embassies in Amman and Tel Aviv. The inauguration of the embassies was scheduled for the 11th of the current month, two weeks after the two countries established diplomatic ties.

'Low-Key' Ceremonies To Be Held 11 Dec

JN0612094894 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 6 Dec 94 p 21

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-RA'Y, PETRA—Counselor 'Umar al-Rifa'i from the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will raise the Jordanian flag over the Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv, and Yuri Halvon, head of the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Embassies Department, will raise the Israeli flag over the Forte Grand Hotel on Sunday in a low-key ceremony marking the inauguration of the temporary premises of the two embassies.

In a meeting held at the Foreign Ministry yesterday, the Jordanian and Israeli sides worked out the final arrangements for the opening of the Jordanian and israeli embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman on Sunday.

The Jordanian side, led by 'Umar al-Rifa'i, and the Israeli side, led by Yuri Halvon, had earlier discussed the issue of the two embassies' sites.

The Jordanian and Israeli ambassadors are set to officially assume their posts within six weeks. Halvon said the Israeli diplomatic mission will be inaugurated at about 1100 local time, 0900 GMT, and the Jordanian diplomatic mission will be inaugurated at about 1500 local time, 1300 GMT.

Halvon added that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres are expected to nominate the first Israeli envoy to Jordan shortly.

AL-RA'Y has learned that Ramiz al-Qusus, first secretary at the Foreign Ministry, and 'Umar al-Nahar will run the Jordanian mission in Israel.

PA Official Views Crossings Committee Meeting

JN0512185094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Report by Hasan Abu-Zayid from "With the Events Program"—italicized passages are recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli-Palestinian committee for crossings affairs concluded its meeting at the Erez checkpoint a short while ago. Brigadier General (Ariel Chismar Ramot), Defense Ministry deputy coordinator in the territories, and Engineer Majdi al-Khalidi, director general of the Planning and International Cooperation Bureau at the Palestinian Authority [PA], attended the meeting. The committee today discussed the question of transporting goods to the self-rule area through the Allenby bridge and the Rafah crossing, and began making preparations for that. Eng. Majdi al-Khalidi, head of the Palestinian side:

[Al-Khalidi] *Today's meeting is the third by the committee for the commodities and transportation crossing point. The committee met today to continue the discussions which took place during other meetings. Today, we discussed detailed arrangements for issues related to customs, security, transportation, and the construction of this crossing. The crossing will allow for the entry of commodities to and from Gaza, Jericho, and the West Bank. This crossing will allow for the entry of cars, buses, and tourist vehicles to and from these areas. It will also provide better business opportunities for merchants and importers.*

We asked Majdi al-Khalidi, head of the Palestinian side, whether there has been progress in today's negotiations.

[Al-Khalidi] *There has been progress, but we would like to point out that this progress is insufficient. We would like to ask the Israeli side to help us expedite those negotiations so that we can start exporting and importing commodities. We hope for greater cooperation.*

On Wednesday [7 December] the crossings committee will hold another meeting to discuss the establishment of a port in Gaza. Donor countries will finance the establishment of this port.

[Al-Khalidi] *We will start discussing the Gaza port on Wednesday through a subcommittee such as this one. Discussions will start in general about the principles which we will raise. I believe that this issue will pass through stages similar to those through which the commodities and passenger crossings passed. This means that customs, security, and planning committees will discuss the arrangements of Israeli presence or supervision or any Israeli role in these crossings. Regarding the construction of the port, this is a strictly Palestinian responsibility.*

Palestinians Arrive in Cairo for Talks with Israelis

NC0612064894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2320 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 5 Dec (MENA)—A Palestinian delegation led by Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, local government minister in the Palestinian Authority [PA], arrived here today to take part in the Palestinian-Israeli round of negotiations due to start here tomorrow, Tuesday.

Dr. 'Urayqat stated on arrival that tomorrow's round of talks will involve negotiations on the elections between a delegation led by 'Urayqat and an Israeli one led by an official not yet named following the resignation of Dani

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Rothschild from all his government posts. 'Urayqat added that consultations will also be held between a Palestinian delegation led by Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, and Yuri Savir, the Israeli Foreign Ministry's director general, on the redeployment of the Israeli forces, the requirements for the elections, and the transfer of authority.

Dr. 'Urayqat went on to say that the aim of this round of talks is to implement the interim agreement to include all the West Bank so as to hold the general elections to elect the National Council members and the PA chairman through a direct ballot. [passage omitted]

He noted that this round will be held amid a difficult atmosphere resulting from discouraging statements by Israeli officials following the meeting of the Israeli Cabinet yesterday, particularly the announcement by some officials in the Israeli Government about introducing amendments to the Oslo Agreement with regard to the redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank. He stressed that the Gaza-Jericho Agreement is an inseparable part of the Oslo Agreement and that Gaza and Jericho cannot remain steadfast without an immediate start to the implementation of the interim stage. He said: This is what we hope to achieve in this and the coming round of talks. He added: We the Palestinian side come ready with our papers and plans to prove to the world that the Palestinians are continuing with the peace process and that the Israeli side is the one that is procrastinating.

He concluded by expressing his belief that holding general political elections in the Palestinian territories and completing the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the remaining areas of the West Bank represent the key to the success and salvation of the peace process.

'Urayqat Comments on Negotiations

JN0612080394 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on elections and the Israeli forces' redeployment in the West Bank will begin in Cairo today.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, local government minister in the National Authority and head of the elections negotiations delegation, said that conducting the Palestinian political elections and the Israeli forces' redeployment in the West Bank will save the peace process.

'Urayqat added that this round of negotiations has come amid a difficult atmosphere that has resulted from the Israeli officials' discouraging statements calling for amending the Oslo Agreement and for redeploying the Israeli forces in the West Bank.

'Urayqat explained that the negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides will take place in two committees—the first on the elections, which will be under his chairmanship, and the second on the redeployment of the Israeli forces, under the chairmanship of Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of cooperation and international planning in the National Authority.

The Israeli delegation is led by Gadi Zohar, head of the Israeli military administration in the occupied West Bank.

Magazine Reviews Israel-Syria Negotiations

TA0212165994 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST (MAGAZINE supplement) in English 2 Dec 94 pp 6, 8, 16, 17

[Article by Steve Rodan: "Behind Closed Doors"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The time: November 3, 1992. Yitzhaq Rabin is making his maiden visit to the Golan Heights as prime minister. He enters the dining room of Kibbutz Ortal. Hundreds of people wait outside while Rabin meets with Golan leaders.

The leaders have been preparing for the worst. Several months earlier, on the eve of Knesset elections, Rabin declared that whoever withdrew from the Golan would abandon Israel's security. But weeks after the elections, they began hearing of an agreement for at least partial withdrawal from the heights.

Some Golan leaders had expected Rabin to dispel the reports. After the meeting, they walked out of the kibbutz dining room stunned.

"He said, 'I was chief of staff and I know that whoever said you can have peace with all the Golan is lying,'" recalls Uri Heitner, a member of Ortal. "Rabin said, 'I look at you and say there will be a painful withdrawal, but it won't be a full withdrawal.'"

Today, more than two years later, Rabin insists that he has not changed his opposition to full withdrawal. But his assertion flies in the face of claims by Egyptian, Syrian, U.S. and even Israeli diplomatic sources that the premier agreed over a year ago to full withdrawal for full peace and normalization with Syria. It's an issue that Secretary of State Warren Christopher is expected to raise with Rabin when he arrives for his latest shuttle mission next week.

According to the diplomatic sources, and confirmed by several senior government sources, Rabin began to consider full withdrawal from the Golan seriously during several months of secret talks between Syria and Israel in 1992. The sources say the talks began in Cairo and continued in several European capitals until Syria and Israel reached an understanding as early as October 1992 for a full Israeli withdrawal from the heights. The sources stress that the understanding was not binding, but enabled both sides to continue secret contacts that have lasted until now. A U.S.-sponsored understanding of a full Israeli withdrawal was formulated a year later.

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The sources say the talks were the first of several secret and ongoing channels that involved Israelis, Syrians, Egyptians and U.S. officials. Topics included the components of a complex package that would permit a Syrian-Israeli peace treaty, such as full withdrawal from the Golan, its timetable, security arrangements in south Lebanon and eventual normalization between Damascus and Jerusalem.

Since the first understanding was reached, both sides have inserted numerous changes. The result is that today, after more than two years of secret negotiations and shuttle diplomacy, little is left of the achievements reached in 1992. What is left is the firm Egyptian and Syrian belief that Israel has committed itself to full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, despite numerous public denials by Israeli leaders.

"It's a psychological block on both sides," says Husayn al-Agha, a Lebanese strategist based in London who was involved in one channel of the secret talks. "The one thing that is not clear is the conflicting signals from Israel on full withdrawal. Through third parties, they say yes. Then publicly they say no."

Privately, some Israeli officials agree. But they say the problem rests with the Syrians who have refused to detail their notion of peace, despite Israel having accepted the lion's share of Syrian demands.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin discussed the secret Syrian-Israeli contacts at a meeting with foreign journalists last month, confirming the contacts, but characterizing them as low-level.

"I can't read very clearly the Syrian map," Beilin says. "It's difficult for me to understand why al-Asad didn't seize the opportunity if you (Israel) are ready to uproot and dismantle settlements, if you are ready to speak about sovereignty of the Golan. I missed something in the thought of the other side."

Establishing a secret channel to Syria, Israeli officials say, became possible soon after President Hafiz al-Asad sent a delegation to the Madrid conference in November 1991. Al-Asad however, did not agree that Syrians could meet Israelis until he was sure this would advance Damascus's goals. In their first meetings, Israeli and Syrian negotiators in Washington engaged in polemics, convincing al-Asad that the government of then-prime minister Yitzhaq Shamir would not withdraw from the Golan.

By the spring of 1992, Egyptian and U.S. officials promised that a new Labor-led government would be different. During the Knesset election campaign, U.S. and Israeli sources say, U.S. officials passed messages to the Labor Party saying the Syrians would intensify contacts with a Labor-led government. At the same time, the Bush administration told Damascus that a Rabin-led coalition should be taken seriously.

Al-Asad agreed and authorized secret contacts with Israeli envoys weeks after Rabin entered office. The first took place in Cairo under the auspices of the adviser of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, Usamah al-Baz. On the Syrian side was Syria's ambassador in Cairo 'Isa Darwish. On the Israeli side was special Foreign Ministry envoy Nimrod Novick.

Novick is an old hand at secret diplomacy; he is a former political adviser to Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres but also trusted by Rabin. For most of the last five years, Novick has been an executive of the Merhav Holding Company, traveling worldwide on a diplomatic passport. He has been sent by Peres on secret missions to Russia and China.

The initial Syrian-Israeli contacts were made in August, when Novick embarked on the first of several trips to Cairo, Egyptian and Israeli sources say. Novick told Egyptians and Syrians that the new Rabin government was ready to withdraw from the Golan in exchange for a peace treaty. The sources say Novick stressed that the extent of the withdrawal would be determined later, but would be dependent on the kind of peace Syria was offering.

The Egyptians, who had known Novick for years, liked his tone. The Syrians were interested. "He struck a good chord with many people here," a senior Egyptian diplomatic source involved in the talks says. "Novick talks straight.... He looks to solve problems."

In early September, Beilin joined the dialogue. He met with al-Baz, reiterating a message from Peres that Israel wanted to advance the dialogue and was prepared to deal seriously with Syria. Peres wanted to meet with his Syrian counterpart, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', that month in New York, where both men would attend the opening of the UN General Assembly.

Al-Asad and Mubarak discussed Peres's offer. Egyptian and Israeli diplomats say al-Asad feared that any secret high-level meeting would be leaked, embarrassing his regime. The Syrian president also doubted whether Peres's hints of a generous Israeli withdrawal from the Golan had been authorized by Rabin.

The Egyptians were also skeptical. Al-Baz, first undersecretary in the Foreign Ministry, may have been convinced that Peres could corner Rabin into supporting Israeli concessions, but other Egyptians, including Mubarak, believed the real decision-maker was Rabin.

The result: al-Asad refused Peres's offer to meet al-Shar'. But, Israeli sources say, he allowed a telephone conversation between them.

A September meeting between al-Asad and Mubarak in Cairo was the turning point. Murad Dassuqi, a retired brigadier and leading researcher at the Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies, says the two Arab leaders agreed on full coordination in the Middle east peace process. "At

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that point," Dassuqi says, "al-Asad and Mubarak decided that they would head (Syria) toward full peace with Israel."

Al-Asad also agreed to continue the secret Israeli-Syrian dialogue, though at a lower level than that offered by Peres. Beilin met Syrian diplomats, together with their Egyptian hosts. The Syrians were largely quiet. The Egyptians peppered the deputy minister with questions on what Israel meant by "withdrawal."

Beilin, diplomatic sources say, reiterated that his government, unlike the Likud-led coalition, viewed Israel as being committed by UN resolutions 242 and 338 to a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The Likud government position was that the resolutions did not necessarily require a pullback from every front.

Now Beilin was telling the Syrians that Israel accepted the principle of withdrawal from the Golan, the extent of which would depend on the type of peace al-Asad was offering. The Syrians asked that this commitment be discussed in the Washington talks and be put in writing. Days later, on September 16, Syrian and Israeli negotiators in Washington announced an understanding to discuss the specifics of a withdrawal. This meant the extent of withdrawal and a timetable. Syria agreed to discuss Israel's demand for normalization.

Israel and Syria still remained far apart. Syria wanted a full and quick withdrawal from the Golan while offering vague promises of eventual peace. But Rabin was pleased that Syria was finally prepared to depart from its longtime refusal to discuss a peace treaty before an Israeli withdrawal. He predicted that Damascus and Jerusalem would reach an agreement within a year and pushed for a summit with al-Asad.

Peres wanted the pace to be increased. He launched another channel, this time in Paris. France's then-foreign minister was Roland Dumas, close to Peres and even closer to the Syrians. French diplomatic sources say that Dumas's girlfriend of the last few years is the daughter of Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Talas.

Peres's envoys were Novick and Beilin. In a series of meetings, the Israelis and Syrians presented ideas and drafted proposals. By mid-October, Israeli sources say, an understanding was reached. This included an Israeli agreement in principle to withdraw from the entire Golan over five years. The first stage would be an Israeli withdrawal from a small portion of the heights and Israel's announcement of renewed Syrian sovereignty over the rest.

According to the understanding, Syria would follow by announcing an end to the state of war with Israel. Damascus would also pledge, although not publicly, to restrain Hizballah in Lebanon, which for years has been attacking IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and South Lebanese Army [SLA] positions there.

The sides agreed that after five years of an "interim agreement," Syria and Israel would sign a full peace treaty. The treaty would include a solution to the Palestinian issue, which in late 1992 seemed far from being resolved.

The representatives did not sign a formal agreement. They both agreed that the discussions were academic and did not bind either party. Still, they pledged secrecy. Neither side would be able to announce the meetings or their content without the consent of the other.

Rabin heard about the dialogue in mid-September and expressed his displeasure. He said he was the only address for a back channel. He was particularly upset that Peres was involving the French in secret talks with Syria, believing that they could not support any agreement.

"I want to clarify, especially to the Syrians, that the talks are via one and only one channel—between the Syrian delegation and the Israeli delegation (in Washington)," Rabin said. "All sorts of middlemen are not relevant."

But the debate between Rabin and Peres continued. Peres believed that the government should begin preparing Israelis for a full withdrawal from the Golan in return for diplomatic relations and normalization with Damascus. Peres, a senior Foreign Ministry official recalls, was convinced this was the breakthrough Israel needed.

Rabin was skeptical. He believed the U.S. would be needed to ensure an agreement with Damascus. Without high-level U.S. involvement, Rabin argued, al-Asad would not move.

Moreover, Rabin was concerned about domestic support. He didn't believe the public was ready to accept full withdrawal from the Golan so soon after the elections.

Still, Rabin agreed that Syria would have to be wooed. In November, the prime minister allowed Prof. Itamar Rabinovich, head of the delegation to the Washington talks, to move toward a new phase in the negotiations. The result was that Israel presented Syria a document that offered an undisclosed withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for peace. It was the document that Syrian envoys in Egypt had requested from Beilin.

But Syria was stalling on its commitments in the Paris understandings. The main snag concerned the Israeli expectation that Syria would restrain Hizballah. The Shiite fighters had been attacking Israeli and SLA targets freely, and Syria was doing nothing to stop it. Rabin sent a message to al-Asad regarding what he was told was a Syrian pledge to stop Hizballah.

Al-Asad did not acknowledge any deal, Israeli sources say. Privately, the Syrian response to Rabinovich was that developments during the previous few weeks had changed things. Talas, the Syrian defense minister, had returned from Tehran with an agreement for strategic

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cooperation with Iran. That accord guaranteed Damascus Iranian funding for joint military projects, as well as a pledge not to interfere in each other's internal affairs.

This meant that Iran would not criticize Syria's participation in the peace talks. In addition, Iran would be allowed to supply weapons to Hizballah.

"The parties waffled around the understandings," recalls Tahsin Bashir, a senior Egyptian diplomat who helped negotiate the Camp David Accords and, in 1992, arranged Israeli-Syrian back-channel contacts. "They said, 'In principle, we have an agreement, but...."

In November, Rabin decided to take action in southern Lebanon. He proposed to the cabinet a major military operation to punish Hizballah and to send a message to Syria that, regardless of the peace talks and secret contacts, Israel would not stand by and watch its interests harmed. The cabinet meeting lasted five hours, and ministers led by then-Interior Minister Arye Der'i forced the prime minister to reduce the scope of the operation. In the end, Rabin dropped the idea.

For Rabin, the episode confirmed his belief that the U.S. was needed to ensure that Syria kept its word. He asked the U.S. to increase its involvement in the Israeli-Syrian channel.

Meanwhile, the Syrians quietly demonstrated a willingness to let down their guard. The Syrian Embassy in Cairo began to order material from the Israel Academic Center, which operates a library and runs lectures. Center director Emanuel Marx, recalls the requests that came from the Syrian Embassy's cultural attache. "The Egyptians prepared the ground for us with the Syrians," he says.

Sources close to the foreign minister say Peres was upset about being left out of decision-making. He tried to renew his dialogue with the Syrians, again via his vast contacts in Europe and the Arab world. The word came back: al-Asad wasn't interested.

Even as Foreign Ministry envoys were forging contacts with Syrian representatives, another channel was developing, led by the U.S. and coordinated by Egypt.

The official sponsor was the Washington-based Search for Common Ground, an organization led by former senior U.S. diplomats and defense officials. One of its directors, William Kirby, has been on loan from the State Department. For years, the group had been trying to recruit leading Arabs and Israelis with close ties to their governments for dialogue on solving the Middle East conflict.

"This is called track-two diplomacy," Kirby says. "The role that these talks play is in opening up new ways of looking at things, even though those of us involved in the work know that it is the governments who have to make and carry out agreements."

When the Madrid peace conference was launched in 1991, the Arabs became more receptive to participating in the dialogue. Palestinians and Jordanians were easy to come by. The Syrians were problematic.

"At first, the Syrians we dealt with were citizens of other countries," an Israeli participant in the academic back channel recalls. "Slowly, we got Syrians who were dual nationals. Toward the end, we were dealing with just Syrian nationals."

Bashir was a likely choice as matchmaker. He was friendly with Israelis and Syrians and fully trusted by the government of President Husni Mubarak.

"I participated in a number of back channels that have always brought Syria to the fore," Bashir recalls. "The Syrians are very sensitive. Decisions are always taken by al-Asad. He doesn't delegate (to) anybody."

Starting in May 1992, the first talks were in European capitals. On the Israeli side was a mix of academics. Some, like HA'ARETZ military commentator Ze'ev Schiff, were regarded as close to Rabin and Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Ehud Baraq. Shim'on Shamir, the former ambassador to Egypt, was seen as close to Peres. Al-Agha says the participation of Israelis close to the government made the dialogue significant.

Other Israelis were regarded as closer to the Likud. They included such academics as Dore Gold of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies and Brig.-Gen. Aharon Levran, a former intelligence commander. Gold and Levran insisted on drafting multiple scenarios, for example, the kind of peace Syria would offer for no withdrawal or partial withdrawal.

The Syrians rejected even discussing this. They might not have been security experts, but they were staunch al-Asad loyalists. They were led by Ilyas Samu, head of the international studies department of Aleppo University.

From September 1992 through May 1993, Schiff and Levran worked on a scenario of full Israeli withdrawal, with minor changes, for peace. The 10-page, detailed document contained few specifics on what a Syrian commitment of peace would include, but the Israeli withdrawal would be staged and be simultaneous with Syrian normalization of ties with Israel.

That last draft dealt with Israeli and Syrian security concerns and disagreements. The Israeli side spoke of acceptance in principle of Syrian sovereignty over the Golan while trying to maintain flexibility over Jewish settlements after total Israeli withdrawal. There was no agreement on a withdrawal timetable.

Together with the Syrians, Levran and Schiff, the main source of ideas on full withdrawal, drafted proposals for demilitarization, a reduction of forces and international observers. The document also discussed water rights.

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"We were discussing issues that the Israelis and Syrians were not discussing in official negotiations," says al-Agha, a counselor at Search for Common Ground. "The State Department said the security details were greater than those worked out between the Israeli and Syrian governments. In the future, any agreement will be based on this document."

Al-Agha says the Syrian academics brought the draft to Damascus for approval. Al-Asad did not reject it, but refused to have Search for Common Ground publish it for fear that it would be an embarrassing contradiction of his hard-line public position.

The document was circulated among Israeli and Arab leaders. Al-Agha says Mubarak used to present the study as proof that Israel and Syria were reaching an agreement.

In August 1993, the document was reported in the media. Al-Agha says the Palestinians leaked the document before the announcement of the Israel-PLO accord on self-rule for Gaza and Jericho. The aim, he says, was to show that everybody, including Syria, was negotiating secretly with Israel.

The Syrians suspended the talks on al-Asad's orders, diplomatic sources say. But within weeks the academic channel was reopened.

In October 1993, Syrians and Israelis met again, this time in Oslo. Schiff and Levran were not on the new team, composed of Gold, Yosi Olmert—an expert on Syria and former head of the Government Press Office—and 'Amos Gilbo'a, adviser on Arab affairs to Shamir when he was premier.

On the Syrian side, joining Samu, was 'Aziz Shukri. He was considered the most senior Syrian on the delegation. The rector of Damascus University's law school, Shukri was regarded as the Western face of the al-Asad regime. In the summer of 1992, he delivered a lecture to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in which he said that he understood Israeli security concerns. Diplomatic sources say that statement enraged al-Shar', but Shukri was protected by officials close to al-Asad.

Search for Common Ground staffers showed Israeli officials the Schiff-Levran draft and asked what should be done with it. The conclusion was to distill the political content of the technical paper into a one-page summary.

The Syrians summarized what they meant by normalization. The joint draft had the Syrian academics agreeing to embassies, tourism and free trade. The two sides agreed to discuss the Jewish settlements on the Golan. Security wasn't discussed for lack of time.

The Americans were pleased with the draft. "The efforts coalesced at Oslo," one participant says.

The Syrians and Israelis were asked to bring the drafts to their respective governments. A U.S. source says the Syrians doubted they'd get approval for the Schiff-Levran paper but did get approval for the Oslo document.

In Jerusalem, Olmert submitted the document to the offices of Rabin and Baraq. Within days, he was receiving telephone calls from senior officials saying the document was drawing interest.

The comment was leaked to the Israeli press. Reporter Amnon Barzilay wrote about it in the now-defunct HADASHOT. In late December, the document resurfaced in an Agence France Presse dispatch from Washington. The following morning, Rabinovich discussed the document on national radio. YEDI'OT AHARONOT picked up the story.

Olmert then began to comment publicly on the document. On December 31, 1993, on the eve of the al-Asad-Clinton summit, the prominent London-based Arabic-language daily, AL-HAYAH, ran a front page story on the secret Syrian-Israeli understandings.

At that point, al-Asad was furious, diplomatic sources say. He ordered his academics to withdraw from the dialogue. Syrian diplomatic sources say that al-Asad suspected that Israel was trying to pressure him into admitting that he had negotiated normalization despite his public refusal to address the subject. This was several days before his summit with Clinton.

"The Syrians freaked out," al-Agha recalls. "Al-Asad thought the leak was a deliberate ploy by Israel."

Shukri came in for severe criticism. Only a few months earlier, he had been regarded as the next Syrian foreign minister; he was now accused by the Iraqi press of being an Israeli agent. Shukri resigned his university post.

"The academic channel was helpful because it reinforced feelings among Syrians and Israelis," Olmert says. "It didn't break any new ground.... I know that Israel has to make concessions, although not all the concessions."

Schiff, who would not discuss details of the talks, seems bitter they were halted: "These were meetings of professional people that were severed in the middle by an unfortunate leak."

Bashir is more upbeat: "This dialogue will eventually be continued."

With the academic channel shut down, the Americans moved in. State Department officials, briefed by Search for Common Ground staffers, were aware of the progress made in the talks between Israelis and Syrians. Their job was to ask Rabin where he stood on Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. Unlike the understandings reached on previous secret contacts between Israel and Syria, whatever al-Asad or Rabin said to the Clinton administration would be regarded as binding.

The U.S. point man was Dennis Ross, head of the State Department peace team. Convinced that any progress in

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the Syrian-Israeli talks would require high-level U.S. involvement, Ross established a team to deal solely with the issue and opened a direct channel with Rabin that bypassed Rabinovich.

U.S. officials proceeded methodically. During Secretary of State Warren Christopher's first visit to the Middle East in February 1993, he convinced Rabin to draw a map of how he viewed a staged withdrawal from the Golan. Rabin handed that map to Christopher before the secretary met al-Asad. Rabin stressed that the map could represent a feasible Israeli idea only if Syria were to agree on, among other things, a timetable for withdrawal and security arrangements.

By July 1993, U.S. and Israeli officials felt they were making progress toward a breakthrough: an agreement on a declaration principles between Israel and Syria, formalizing negotiations toward a full peace treaty. Rabin appeared more optimistic than ever. The talks were conducted during Operation Accountability, when Israel shelled Hizballah bases.

In early August, the prime minister asked Christopher to undertake another round of shuttle diplomacy. The U.S. secretary concluded that al-Asad was not interested in a breakthrough and went on vacation. Two weeks later, Rabin capitalized on another track: the Palestinians. He announced that Israel had reached agreement on Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

Al-Asad was furious. He and his aides believed that the U.S. and Israel—perhaps with the knowledge of the PLO—had tricked Damascus into believing that an accord was near and then dumped the Syrians for the Palestinians. For weeks after Oslo, al-Asad would have nothing to do with Israel or Christopher.

Ross worked overtime to prove to Damascus that the U.S. was a credible mediator. With Christopher's approval, he sought a clear pledge from Rabin that Israel would agree to full peace and normalization. Ross explained to Rabin that this was a hypothetical question as Syria had refused to elaborate on what it meant by peace.

But he went one step further. He said Rabin's answer could determine whether the U.S. continued mediating.

For Israeli leaders, it was the same question Syrian representatives had posed to Beilin and Novick a year earlier in Cairo. The difference this time was that the U.S.xaching an accord with Damascus. Say yes, and the U.S. would throw the ball into Syria's court and demand that al-Asad explain what he meant by peace.

In November 1993, Rabin responded. According to a senior political source, Rabin said he would agree to an Israeli withdrawal from the entire Golan if Syria were to pledge full diplomatic relations and normalization with Jerusalem. Ross was pleased and pledged to intensify U.S. efforts. The account was confirmed by a source close to the prime minister.

The premier's answer stunned his aides and critics. "I was astonished that it came out this way," a senior Labor Party source says. "I thought it would take years of negotiations."

In response, 'Oded Ben-'Ami, Rabin's spokesman says, "The story is incorrect." He would not elaborate.

The Americans were pleased and predicted quick progress. Again, they and the Israelis had misjudged al-Asad. In January, Clinton failed to extract a Syrian pledge for full peace with Israel. An Israeli and U.S. assessment of a breakthrough in April was dashed, despite Rabin declaring for the first time that Jewish settlements on the Golan would be uprooted.

Instead, progress was achieved in May. Israeli sources say U.S. officials reviewed all the contacts and proposals between Syria and Israel and arrived at a package. Christopher proposed that Israel agree to withdraw from the Golan in 27 months. It would begin with a symbolic withdrawal from Mount Hermon and an Israeli declaration of Syrian sovereignty over the entire Golan. Syria would announce an end to the state of war.

Rabin wanted a longer timetable. U.S. officials told the prime minister that was impossible. But Israeli sources say the Syrians insisted that nearly two years had already passed from the 1992 understanding, meaning that Israel had had enough time to prepare for withdrawal.

The Syrians also rejected Rabin's attempt to issue a three-year timetable, like that used for the evacuation of the Sinai in 1979. "Israel wants a five-year withdrawal," Darwish, Syria's ambassador to Egypt, says. "But the Golan is much smaller than Sinai."

Rabin also wanted to know what would happen to Hizballah. In the 1992 understanding, Damascus had pledged to dismantle the group. U.S. officials said Hizballah should be dealt with in the next stage of negotiations with Lebanon. The administration believed Syria did not feel the time was ripe to anger Tehran.

"The U.S. understands our concerns on Hizballah and sees this as an issue between Lebanon and Israel," a senior Israeli official says.

Israel agreed to the 27-month withdrawal timetable proposed by the U.S. in May. The Syrians held back, saying it needed further study. Their latest proposal is 16 months for withdrawal from the Golan. Darwish says al-Asad insists that Syria will not begin normalization until after Israeli withdrawal is complete.

Today, most of the secret channels have been shut down. In the meeting with Christopher in August, al-Asad had another request. A senior political source says al-Asad no longer wanted to talk to the Israelis on any level. He wanted to deal solely with Washington and that Christopher would pass on messages.

For Rabin and Peres, the decision was another disappointment. Other officials have concluded that al-Asad

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will never satisfy the Israeli government's demand for public diplomacy and say it will be up to them to persuade Israelis that peace with Syria is worth the price.

This, despite the decision by Syria to allow free Jewish emigration, welcome an Israeli-Arab delegation and have al-Shar' interviewed on Israel TV. They say the focus of the Syrian-Israeli talks now rest not on public diplomacy but on what is regarded as the most important and final element in resolving the issues between Damascus and Jerusalem: security arrangements for the Golan Heights. The latest deadline for Israeli officials is mid-1995.

Beilin says that the security measures are the most important condition. "Once we have this, it'll be much easier than all the other aspects."

Early contacts between Israel and Syria were achieved with help from the Egyptians.

In November 1993, Israeli sources say, two meetings were held between Israeli and Syrian military officers in Rome. Egyptian and Syrian diplomats deny the meetings were held.

The Arab diplomats acknowledge a meeting between Israeli and Syrian generals this year under the auspices of the UN Disengagement of Forces on the Golan Heights. Also this year, for the first time, Syria acknowledged longtime violations of the 1974 disengagement agreement and pledged to rectify them. They included the stationing of Syrian commandos around al-Qunaytirah and of heavy weapons on the heights, both prohibited by the accord.

Once again, the U.S. has intensified this channel. Rabinovich, now ambassador to the U.S., and Syrian Ambassador in Washington Walid Mu'allim are expected to discuss military issues in Washington. Again, progress is expected to be slow. The Syrians, who have refused to join the multilateral talks, are uncomfortable with the vocabulary of arms control and disarmament.

"We would translate all of the material from the multilateral (talks) in Arabic and give them to the Syrians," Bashir recalls. "Then, we would sit down with them and explain it. The Syrians might not have been at the multilaterals, but through us they began to know exactly what was going on."

Unlike previous talks, the military channel is to be composed of high-level representatives. They include Chief of Staff Baraq. Syria will appoint a general. Rabin, a senior political source says, realizes that he's in a hurry. "He doesn't have one year or two years," the source says. "He has six months to complete this."

The question now is what Israel's target is. Rabin says he hopes an agreement can be announced by July. Privately, he says he is aiming for a peace treaty rather than an Oslo-type DOP [Declaration of Principles].

Beilin says both sides have gotten past discussing principles—such as those agreed to with the PLO in the Gaza-Jericho First accord—and have moved into the details that would comprise a peace treaty.

Article 5 of the first set of principles drawn up at the end of 1992 by Syria and Israel—which calls for a land-for-peace deal—remains the only point of agreement.

"We have to speed up the pace," Beilin says. "We had progress in the DOP with Christopher's shuttle diplomacy. But the pace is not fast enough. Formally, we are still negotiating a DOP rather than a peace treaty with Syria. I hope we will go beyond the DOP."

In retrospect, most of the secret negotiators conclude that their efforts have not led to progress. They watched Syrians and Israelis change positions, add conditions and backtrack from understandings they had drafted more than two years ago.

Today, Bashir is not even certain about what was achieved in the early days of talks in Cairo. The fate of the talks is in the hands of al-Asad and Rabin, who, he says, are not ready to decide.

"Both parties have since put the issue on a slow burner," he says. "Al-Asad feels he has to act as if he's not in a race for peace."

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Chief on Peace, Mideast Market, AMU

NC0412222094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2110 GMT 4 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Dec (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has reasserted that without a fair and comprehensive peace in the Middle East the Casablanca Economic Summit will produce no results. In an interview with the newspaper AL-AHRAM to be published tomorrow, he says we do not fear a Middle East market, but what counts is how to deal with it.

Discussing Arab-European cooperation, 'Abd-al-Majid said that Europe plays a major role in cooperation with the Arab countries in every area, such as the peace process and economic cooperation. He noted that Europe's role is as important as the U.S. one and that all European countries have interests in the Middle Eastern countries, especially in the Arab region. He called on Europe to enhance cooperation with the Arab countries in support of the peace process, especially since peace is in the interest of all parties. He said that if the peace process succeeds, it means that there will be development and stability, which both Europe and ourselves value.

'Abd-al-Majid held Israel responsible for obstructing certain issues. He said that the clash that occurred in

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Gaza and what is going on there sounded the alarm bell of the (?problem). He stressed that if we do not move faster, "the peace process will collapse." He said: We are moving toward peace and not domination and we hope that they will cooperate with us on the same level.

Regarding Egypt's efforts to join the Arab Maghreb Union [AMU], 'Abd-al-Majid said that Egypt plays a pioneering role in the region, due to its standing and weight. He noted that Egypt is a North African country and has expressed a desire to join the AMU. He said that Article 9 of the Arab League Charter allows Egypt to join such groupings. He stressed that joining this grouping would be positive for both Egypt and the Arab Maghreb countries. He said that Egypt has as close ties with the Arab east countries as with the Maghreb countries. He referred to Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's statement that Egypt's relationship with the AMU will not be at the expense of the Damascus Declaration. He said: In my view the Damascus Declaration and the AMU are not contradictory. He noted that Egypt's participation in the AMU will be positive and constructive, noting that Egypt has always played a positive role in all stages of Arab action.

Environment Council Urges End to Libya Embargo

NC0512214694 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of its sixth session today, the Arab ministerial council in charge of environmental affairs warned against the possible grave consequences of the embargo imposed on the Libyan Jamahiriyah on the environment. The council said that the consequences could go beyond the Libyan borders to threaten neighboring countries.

In a statement issued this evening, the council urged all sides involved in this crisis to immediately respond to the Arab League's positive proposals and work out a peaceful settlement to the Libyan-Western crisis to avoid any exacerbation of tension in the region.

Palestinian Affairs

Al-Husayni Warns Against Slowing Israeli Talks

NC0612072494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0607 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA)—Faysal al-Husayni, the Palestinian Authority member responsible for the Jerusalem file, has warned against slowing down the negotiations with the Israeli side. He asked Israel to change the way the negotiations are being run with the Palestinians, noting that the current Israeli method of handling the negotiations will harm the future of the peace process.

In an interview with [Cairo's] Voice of the Arabs [date and time not specified], he affirmed the Palestinian Authority's concern to give all Palestinians the right of expression and the right to exercise political action on condition that they refrain from violence and the use of arms. He said he believes that the Palestinian citizen's consciousness will help overcome this stage.

He described his recent talks with Jordanian officials as positive. He said the purpose of the talks was to coordinate the two sides' positions on several issues, especially the position of Jerusalem.

Israel Urged To Withdraw Forces From West Bank

JN0512171794 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Authority today reiterated its call on Israel to abide by its commitments and withdraw its forces from the West Bank cities and villages. Marwan Kanafani, adviser to His Excellency President 'Arafat, said that Israel should implement the signed agreements as soon as possible.

This Palestinian call comes following statements made by a number of Israeli officials in which they call for not deploying the Israeli Army outside populated areas.

It is noteworthy that the Oslo accord, which was signed between the PLO and Israel in 1993, stipulates that Israel deploys its forces outside the populated areas in the West Bank before the elections.

Higher Negotiations Follow-up Committee Meets

JN0612065994 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Higher Negotiations Follow-up Committee has met under President Yasir 'Arafat, PLO Executive Committee chairman and head of the Palestinian National Authority. This meeting was held following the ministerial decision on reforming the committee.

The committee discussed the tasks of the Palestinian delegation that will participate in the negotiations in Cairo today, and stressed that these negotiations should focus on the full implementation of the interim stage agreement in accordance with the Oslo and Washington accords. The committee believes that there are signs of obstruction or changes to the bases of the agreement, something that would undermine the peace process, which should serve the interests of all parties, and, therefore, all sides should abide by what they have agreed upon and signed.

The committee decided to continue to closely watch the negotiations process, and to meet again after this round of negotiations in order to study the extent of progress in this process, and to discuss a number of organizational issues related to its work.

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'Abd-Rabbuh Appointed New Follow-up Committee Head

MM0612090594 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 5 Dec 94 p 4

[Report by 'Ali al-Salih: " 'Abd-Rabbuh Replaces 'Abbas in Committee Following Up Negotiations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the Palestinian Authority has decided to appoint Palestinian Culture and Information Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh as head of the committee following up the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations because Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin), who used to hold this post, is not present on the self-rule territory.

It is worth noting that 'Abd-Rabbuh, who is the leader of the Palestinian Democratic Union "FIDA," is the committee's deputy chairman.

The new appointment is part of the changes made by the Palestinian Authority to the committee's formation at its weekly meeting the day before yesterday in Gaza. Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local affairs in the authority, confirmed this to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT.

And Palestinian Justice Minister Furayh Abu-Middayn has been added to the committee's former members, namely Planning and International Cooperation Minister Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, and Economy and Development Minister Ahmad Quray' (Abu-'Ala').

Abu-Rudaynah categorically denied reports claiming that 'Abd-Rabbuh submitted his resignation and that the Palestinian president has accepted it. He described the reports as rumors, stressing that 'Abd-Rabbuh attended the authority's meeting the day before yesterday and the meeting President 'Arafat held in Gaza yesterday (in Abu-Rudaynah's presence) with the U.S. consul in Israel, in which he handed the consul a message to U.S. President Bill Clinton about the talks 'Arafat held recently in the Belgian capital, Brussels, and latest developments in the peace process.

Abu-Rudaynah said in clear admission of the existence of a disagreement between 'Abd-Rabbuh and 'Arafat: "The existence of a disagreement between 'Abd-Rabbuh and 'Arafat does not mean that that 'Abd-Rabbuh will be denied his post if the disagreement is within the democratic framework and does not deviate from collective decisionmaking."

According to what a source close to 'Abd-Rabbuh told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, it is no secret that 'Abd-Rabbuh is alarmed at the manner in which the negotiations are run, and he stresses the need for the existence of an authority for the negotiations. 'Abd-Rabbuh has recently expressed his discontent at the Palestinian police's confiscation of the Jerusalem-based newspapers and the delay in their distribution in the self-rule areas because of their exaggeration, according to a security official, in estimating the number of those who attended a rally organized by Hamas in the Gaza Strip on 27 November.

PA Official Comments on PA-Hamas Differences

JN0512201294 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement] accused Washington today of encouraging the Palestinian Authority [PA] to commit new crimes because it refrained from condemning the Palestinian Police following the Gaza incidents. Hamas announced, in a statement issued today, that it will escalate its stand as of next Wednesday.

Answering questions by radio correspondent Salah Salamah, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary of the PA chairmanship, spoke about the demands the Palestinians will present to Christopher and the differences between the PA and Hamas:

[Begin 'Abd-al-Rahim recording] The talks, during the visit, will focus on the obstacles to the political settlement. We will affirm that security will not be achieved in the region and the entire peace process will not succeed without achieving real and essential progress on the Palestinian track, particularly with regard to the implementation of the interim period.

As I believe, this will be the second visit to Gaza by Mr. Christopher. He visited Gaza the first time after brother Yasir 'Arafat's arrival. [end recording]

Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim also spoke about the differences between the PA and Hamas. He said:

[Begin recording] ['Abd-al-Rahim] We hope that these differences will be resolved through democratic dialogue proceeding from our belief in political pluralism, but not in the plurality of authorities. After a half an hour, there will be a meeting with the brothers in Hamas, with Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar and Isma'il Haniyah. On our part, myself and brothers Sufyan Abu-Zaydah and Hisham 'Abd- al-Razzaq will take part in the meeting.

This dialogue is a continuation of the previous round, part of which was attended by brother Yasir 'Arafat, who blessed the meeting between Fatah and Hamas.

[Salamah] Hamas today accused the U.S. Administration of encouraging the PA to commit what Hamas termed as new massacres because the U.S. Administration did not condemn the self-rule police in the Gaza incidents which took place on 18 November. Do you still believe that differences with Hamas still exist despite the formation of a joint committee to tackle the repercussions of these differences?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Of course, we seek to resolve all differences and to reach common denominators. On our part, we have good intentions and sound approaches to resolve these differences to deepen democracy and

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national unity and to prevent Palestinian internecine fighting, as well as to entrench political pluralism. What is said about the U.S. Administration and the Israeli side putting pressure on us to enter into confrontation with Hamas is baseless heresy and media provocation. The brothers in Hamas are the first to realize that the PA is concerned about national unity and Palestinian blood.

[Salamah] What formula for a solution will you propose in this round of dialogue?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Brother Salah, Hamas admits that the PA is the only authority on the ground. The provocative acts in terms of Friday sermons; using loudspeakers in mosques; posting notices inside mosques; placards written by brothers in Hamas, [Islamic] Jihad, and others; slogans written on walls; carrying arms in the streets; and other acts should be stopped to defuse the situation. This existed before the arrival of the authority as we were told by the brothers in Fatah. Brothers Sufyan Abu-Zaydah and Hisham 'Abd-al-Razig, who lived here, told us that such problems existed before the arrival of Fatah and Hamas. If we want to defuse the situation and remove these manifestations, which will only exacerbate the situation, we should put an end to all this and admit that there is only one authority on the ground, not two.

[Salamah] Are you ready to guarantee freedom of expression, political opposition, and public liberties, in general?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Yes, yes. And we agreed on this in the document of 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish, al-Tibi, and Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi. We agreed that each party can express its views in the appropriate way without slandering any other personalities or parties. [end recording]

Fatah Seen as 'Parallel Force' To Confront Hamas

MM0512165094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 3 Dec 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Bakr 'Uwaydah: " 'Arafat Preparing Fatah as Parallel Force to Hamas"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpts] Gaza—The agreement announced yesterday between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Hamas leader Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar is bound to arouse satisfaction and encounter support among the Strip's residents, who are yearning for any measure eliminating fear of the eruption of infighting between the Palestinian self-rule authority on the one hand and Hamas and Islamic Jihad on the other. Although the agreement the two parties reached yesterday on [the formation of] an investigation committee to determine who was responsible for the 18 November incidents is a positive indication of the desire to avoid any other bloody confrontations, it is not sufficient to prompt one to say that these confrontations have been defused completely. The announcement of the agreement yesterday coincided with the distribution of leaflets in Gaza and the West Bank, carrying the signatures of all the opposition organizations and holding the [Palestinian] Authority responsible for these incidents. [passage omitted]

In Gaza, some people interpret the sudden reinforcement of Fatah's public and armed presence on the scene as "mobilization" aimed at drawing the attention of the opposition, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad, to the existence of a force parallel to and perhaps stronger than them, telling them that it is ready to engage in any potential confrontation. Some people believe that some world reactions to the incidents of last month caused embarrassment to the Palestinian Authority, as the Palestinian police found itself accused of opening fire on unarmed civilians—which prompted President 'Arafat to spare the Palestinian police such a situation in the future, keeping it neutral while Fatah confronts the opposition in the event of any armed confrontations. [passage omitted]

Officials Term Fatah-Hamas Meeting 'Positive'

JN0612112894 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority, has said that the meeting of the committee entrusted with dialogue between the Fatah and Hamas [Islamic Resistance] movements was positive.

He stressed that this meeting is an important step on the road to entrenching national unity.

The committee entrusted with dialogue met in Gaza yesterday under the chairmanship of PLO Executive Committee member Jamal al-Surani. Fatah Central Committee member al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim and Hamas official Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar attended as members.

At the end of the meeting, all parties stressed their adherence and commitment to the declared mediation document. They also agreed to remove provocative slogans written on walls.

The committee is scheduled to resume work on 25 December.

In a statement to Voice of Palestine today, Hasan Tahbub, awqaf minister in the Palestinian National Authority, described the results of the dialogue that was held between the Fatah and Hamas movements as positive. The minister said there are no disputes or differences among brothers, stressing that the Palestinian people are one united family facing one discrepancy.

The minister expressed astonishment at the escalation of the Western campaign against Islam and Muslims. He said that this is due to the growing just and tolerant Islamic forces, which have a panoramic view of the world.

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He said that the West is perpetrating a massacre against the Muslims because of its animosity towards Islam.

Minister Hasan Tahbub emphasized that Muslims are not terrorists, and that what is being reported does not represent the true image of Islam.

Hamas Issues Statement on Intifadah Anniversary

JN0512205694 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, today issued a statement congratulating our Palestinian people on the seventh anniversary of the blessed intifadah. It called for several activities in the next few days to commemorate this glorious anniversary and urged an escalation of confrontations against the Zionist enemy.

It called for considering 7 and 8 December days for escalating the confrontation against the enemy and settlers; 9 December a day of general strike on the intifadah's seventh anniversary; 14 December a day to celebrate the launch of the Hamas Movement; and 18 December a day to mourn the souls of the martyrs who were killed one month ago in Gaza massacre.

Opposition Factions Statement on Ties With Fatah

JN0512210494 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 5 Dec 94

["Text" of statement by "nationalist and Islamic forces and personalities in Palestine"; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The authority versus the people. Masses of our great Palestinian people. Our honorable Arab people. Our glorious Islamic nation. God's peace and blessings be with you. Since the first moment 'Arafat and his clique signed the Oslo agreement, we have realized that the enemies have decided to turn our struggle for the liberation of the homeland into a struggle among the children of the homeland. They have found persons among the Palestinians to implement this decision. The explicit and implicit provisions of the Oslo agreement are clear in terms of the 'Arafatist side's relinquishment of our people's rights and commitment to maintaining the security of the Zionist entity. The Cairo agreement on the mechanism for implementing the Oslo agreement removes any ambiguity about security cooperation against acts which the Zionist enemy terms terrorist acts. Committing itself to implementing the agreement, the 'Arafatist Palestinian side chased and punished those who threaten the Zionist entity's security. [passage omitted]

The political statement issued by the nationalist and Islamic forces in Palestine continues: Masses of our great people. Masses of our great nation: We are not in a state of internal struggle of infighting. In fact, it is the authority versus the people. Throughout numerous phases in the history of our conflict with the enemy, the 'Arafatist clique has been jeopardizing our national unity, paying no attention to the various Palestinian forces. 'Arafat made unilateral decisions on many occasions without referring to the PLO institutions or the Palestinian factions. He even ignored Fatah and its cadres in his decisions. Yet, from time to time, he tried to resort to Fatah to save himself from a certain situation or to find support in another situation. He is even implementing the Oslo agreement, which has grave consequences, with the support of only a few people around him and without completing the steps to acquire the legitimacy from the PLO institutions. The insistence of the authority and the leaders of the 'Arafatist security agencies on disarming our people is part of the constant Zionist colonialist plan to disarm the people. They are not demanding those who find amusement in using weapons to achieve personal ends and who brag about using firearms at wedding parties and in reckless acts to hand over their arms. Rather, they are demanding this from the mujahidin and strugglers among our people. Moreover, the authority insists on confiscating the freedom of expression. This is clearly evidenced by the closure of some newspapers and the banning of others in the self-rule areas.

The political statement adds: We are still at the stage of national liberation. Our entire country, Palestine, is still under occupation. Our people are displaced and living in refugee camps. The Zionist scheme based on the Balfour Declaration and subsequent policies is still being implemented and entrenched. The self-rule does not constitute Palestinian sovereignty. Rather, it establishes self-administration under the sovereignty of the occupation. Therefore, it is our natural and human right to work to repulse the aggression and expel the unjust usurper. Any attempt to weaken our will or disarm our mujahidin and strugglers will only be in the service of the enemies of the Arabs and Muslims and a response to the will of the Zionist entity, the United states, and their allies. In this context, the Islamic resistance Movement, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad Movement do not stand alone. In fact, they are backed by the masses of our Palestinian people and the forces resisting liquidation and capitulation. We do not believe that only those two movements are targeted. Rather, our entire people are targeted. They are required to be brought to their knees and all their rights usurped. The martyrs who fell in Gaza were from all factions. They include members of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Fatah, the Islamic Jihad Movement, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and ordinary citizens. The self-rule authority launched a propaganda campaign to hold Hamas responsible for the massacre, using the same methods used by dictatorial regimes to twist facts. It tried to implicate Iran and so-called foreign forces as a means of concealment and misguidance. We reject the implication of Iran or any other state in acts perpetrated by hands alien to our people's deep-rooted traditions to appease the

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Zionist entity, implement the provisions of the agreements concluded with it, and in response to the demands of Western nations, headed by the United States. This authority is now trying to impress on the minds of our people that there is a struggle between Fatah and the Islamic Resistance Movement. After the 'Arafatist authority tried to marginalize Fatah and sow seeds of disagreement among its members, the authority is now reorganizing the Fatah Hawks to involve them in the confrontation and to turn Fatah from a militant organization into an authoritarian organization used by the authority to implement its policies.

In their political statement, the nationalist and Islamic forces continue: Nevertheless, our people's struggle is one agai..st the occupation. It requires the unity of the people. In light of this situation, we will let the people hear our voice without resorting to arms as a language of dialogue. If the 'Arafatist authority chooses to confront our people with bullets, we will leave the judgment to the people. Thanks to their profound awareness, our people will be able tell what is right and what its wrong. We are not in a conflict with our brothers in the Fatah Movement who led our people's struggle for many years. Fatah is an inseparable part of our people. We are certain that they appreciate the difficult circumstances experienced by the homeland. Their conscience will not allow them to break national taboos. We urge our brothers in Fatah not to be dragged into the plot against our people. We urge our people to stand against the humiliating plots and against attempts to turn the struggle into an intra-Palestinian struggle. Let us close our ranks and insist on maintaining our national, inalienable rights. God's peace and blessings be with you.

[Signed] The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, Fatah-the Uprising, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Nation's Forum, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, the Arab Socialist Ba'th party-Palestine Wing, and a large number of nationalist and Islamic Palestinian personalities.

Yasin Refuses To Link Release to Return of Body

TA0512132994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Ahmad Yasin refuses to be released from jail if it depends on the return of Ilan Sa'adon's body.

Shaykh Yasin told Ahmad al-Tibi and 'Aodallah Nimr Darwish, who visited him in Ashmoret Prison in Sharon today, that Sa'adon's body has to be returned to his family as quickly as possible, but stressed that he does not have direct control over those who can act on the matter.

Al-Tibi and Darwish said on leaving the prison that Shaykh Yasin brought up with them a suggestion on how to deal with the issue and that they will act on the matter in the coming days. They refused to go into details.

Our correspondent Yafa Glick reports that al-Tibi and Darwish will meet with 'Arafat this afternoon to report on their meeting with Shaykh Yasin.

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Algeria

FIS Sends Letter to U.S. Embassy in Brussels

BR0212162494 Brussels Islamic Salvation Front Executive Body Abroad Letter in French 14 Nov 94

[Text of letter from the Islamic Salvation Front's Executive Body Abroad mailed to the U.S. Embassy in Brussels on 14 November, postmarked Vilvoorde, a northern suburb of Brussels]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, and compassionate.

Sir,

By means of these messages we would like to alert free and democratic states and politicians, and we are trying to appeal to people with a conscience who believe in and are working for the principles of human rights and freedoms.

In Algeria, three years after the ending of the election process, the country is in deep mourning and each day it weeps for dozens of innocent people coldly murdered in front of their families. According to recent reports, during the month of November the number of people murdered increased to a terrifying rate of around 200 people executed each day, of whom at least 80 percent are summarily murdered out of the population in collective massacres.

One wonders how the military government in Algeria can commit horrible and odious crimes against "its people." How can anybody accept the massacre of whole families and the illegal imprisonment of their children, the bombing of villages, and whole settlements, the summary murder of dozens of innocent people, and the scattering of their remains in the streets, the burning of people after killing them, and the systematic use of torture to the death...

Faced with the scale of this crime, the information is highly controlled, filtered, and manipulated by the military junta which has a monopoly of all the media.

But what is even more serious in this tragedy is that we are witnessing a strange silence on the part of the international community. Some Western states have released huge credits to the ruling junta since the coup d'etat with a view first to swelling the generals' bank accounts and second to covering spending for the purchase of equipment to repress the population.

Recently France sent a large delivery of military equipment to be used to savagely repress the opposition and the population.

In view of the fact that we are faced with a "Western" world which advocates respect for democracy, human rights, and individual and collective freedom, we are launching an appeal to all free states which respect these principles to expose and condemn the crime and genocide perpetrated by the junta against the Algerian people. We also ask all countries to shoulder their responsibilities with regard to the consequences which this conflict would have for the peace, stability, and balance of this region of the world.

In the hope of seeing positive action taken, please accept our sincere good wishes.

Enclosed: Communique from the official spokesman of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] Executive Body Abroad.

Communique Assails 'Repression'

BR0212163194 Brussels Islamic Salvation Front Executive Body Abroad Communique in French 13 Nov 94

[Text of "communique" from the Islamic Salvation Front's Executive Body Abroad mailed to the U.S. Embassy in Brussels on 14 November, postmarked Vilvoorde, a northern suburb of Brussels]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, and compassionate.

Condemnation of a Plot

The planned failure of a negotiated solution to the crisis which our country is experiencing following the statement dictated to General Zeroual and delivered on the eve of 1 November 1994, is the first episode in a vast and extremely serious plot aimed at preparing national and international opinion, through the media and politically, to accept the terrible operations of blind repression. This is repression practised on a grand scale, with the aim of terrorizing the population.

Consequently, the speech delivered and everything which followed is even more serious and tragic than the halting of the election process and the coup d'etat in January 1992.

The warning signs have not been slow in appearing:

1. Between 1 and 9 November 1994, more than 1,000 murders were recorded, most of which were of innocent civilians savagely massacred. The bodies were thrown into the streets, bearing signs of mutilation and horrible torture.

2. The cowardly attack on young scouts at Mostaganem, which was planned 24 hours in advance and to which television technicians were invited, was carried out by the military security services. The pictures of the crime were shown on television in a provocative and manipulative way to incite the population to kill each other and to remove any attempt to clarify this tragedy because "the perpetrators have been killed?!"

3. Two young girls in the flower of their youth had their throats cut by the same security services. Their only

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crime was that their brothers are members of the Mujahidin and their parents support the Islamic plan. This cowardly crime was merely vengeance against that family's Islamic leanings. This ignoble act was attributed to the armed Islamic groups on the pretext that they refused a marriage of pleasure, whereas everybody knows that it is prohibited among the Sunnis. Furthermore, such marriage is never carried out under constraint.

4. To disguise these crimes and say nothing about these serious violations, the junta has carried out its threats through the information minister, silencing the media and banning the publication of several newspapers including the daily EL-OUMMA and weekly EL-OUDJH EL-AKHAR. The dictatorship has once again just stifled the freedom of the press, but mainly the opposition press, after systematically crushing the freedom of individuals and political life.

5. The distribution of arms to individuals allied to the junta and the drafting of lists of people obeying the same criteria to arm one section of the population against the other with the aim of plunging the country into a devastating civil war.

6. The junta aims to create a political climate characterized by demagogic statements to conceal its crimes from the population, forcing the population to stage mass demonstrations on pain of death, closing schools and factories, and forcing traders to close their stores. These demonstrations have often been led by policemen and soldiers in civilian dress.

All these mobilizations are aimed at concealing barbaric and odious crimes, perpetrated in a horrible way and which are growing in the knowledge that the junta is currently receiving very sophisticated military equipment including oxygen-absorbing bombs which destroy all trace of life in a one-kilometer radius. Some of this equipment, supplied by a European country has already arrived in the Jijel region.

Faced with this serious and tragic situation, we condemn the strange and disappointing silence on the part of the international community.

Moreover, we condemn the terrorist attacks perpetrated against the civilian population and particularly the women and children.

In addition, we warn international opinion of the existence of a vast plot aimed at Algeria with the complicity of foreign parties, with the aim of impoverishing and subjugating the Algerian people to facilitate its domination. We will say what the Koran teaches us: "Allah is sufficient to us; he is our best refuge."

We call on the Algerian people to show fraternity and solidarity to defuse the manipulations which are aimed at their unity. God said "Hold fast to the link of Allah and do not be divided."

Egypt

Five Fugitive 'Terrorist' Leaders Arrested

NC0312135494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1315 GMT 3 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Dec (MENA)—The State Security Investigation forces today arrested five fugitive terrorist leaders in al-Minya. The terrorists were involved in recent terrorist incidents in the governorate. They planned and prepared a number of terrorist operations against security officers and forces in the al-Minya Governorate.

An official source in the Ministry of Interior has stated that the security agencies arrested the five terrorists in the village of Bani Warkan in the al-'Adawi urban center in al-Minya. The terrorists are 'Isam Khayri Hasan Rifa'i, a student at the faculty of science who was arrested in 1990; 'Ashur 'Abd-al-Wahhab 'Abd-al-Fattah Husayn, a student at the al-'Adawi center; Salah Muhammad al- 'Adawi, a civil servant; 'Adil Salah 'Abd-al-Hamid Salih, a farmer; and Rashad Jum'ah 'Abd-al-Fattah Yusuf, a farmer. They are all residents of al-'Adawi urban center.

The security forces have thus aborted a terrorist scheme, the official said, explaining that weapons and ammunition were found in a secret room under the pulpit of the al-Tawhid Mosque in the village of Bani Warkan.

The source added that information available to the security forces indicated that the terrorists were to meet in the above-mentioned mosque after sunset prayers to decide on roles and implement their scheme.

After taking the necessary procedures and obtaining the prosecutor's permission to arrest the members of the organization and seize the weapons and ammunition in their possession, forces from the State Security Investigation in the al-Minya Security Directorate and the Central Security Forces surprised the organization's members during the meeting and arrested the above-mentioned elements, the source said.

He added that a search of the room lying under the mosque's pulpit revealed two automatic rifles, the first having one magazine and the second two; one 9-mm short-range Beretta revolver with an erased serial numbers; and three gun barrels.

The forces also found four blank identification cards, a large number of blank university identification cards, a field telescope, papers listing the names of targeted police officers, and organizational papers.

The source affirmed that the security agencies will resume their efforts to chase fugitive terrorist elements and strike at their hideouts, guided by information available to the State Security Investigation.

The prosecution has been notified to launch an investigation.

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Al-Baz, UK's Hogg Discuss Bosnia-Herzegovina

NC0412105594 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 4 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, met today with Douglas Hogg, minister of state at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

After the meeting Hogg said that they discussed several issues, particularly the situation in the Middle East, the peace process, and the Libyan-Western dispute. He described the talks as very useful. Commenting on the UN failure to halt Serbian aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hogg said that it is not possible to stop the fighting or end the civil war by military measures. He noted that military power can, however, be used to support humanitarian aid operations. He declared that the concerned parties must be encouraged to reach a political settlement.

Al-Baz affirmed that the Egyptian people are dismayed by European passivity vis-a-vis the escalating violence in Bosnia, which is on the verge of exterminating the people of Bihac and other Muslim areas, by the European countries's failure to mount any decisive action on this issue, and, indeed, by their opposition to any such action by other countries.

Al-Baz stressed that the European countries's position is unacceptable and can only be interpreted as indifference to the fate of the Muslim minority in a European country.

Writer Examines, Refutes U.S. Press Campaign

NC0512223094

[FBIS Editorial Report] Chief Editor Makram Muhammad Ahmad discusses in his 4,000-word article in Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic on 2 December on pages 3-6 the "incidental confidence crisis in Egyptian-American relations" outwardly caused by the campaign of criticism some American papers are mounting "to distort facts and fabricate untrue interpretations of the clear-cut Egyptian stances that seek first and foremost to preserve national and pan-Arab interests."

Admitting that this is not the first time American papers have criticized the policy in Egypt, he remarks that: "Egypt does not deny the American press the right to express its views." He notes, however, that the matter "this time is taking the form of an orchestrated campaign that implicitly involves some semi-official circles, as though the goal is to subdue Egyptian willpower to prevent it from having different views."

Outlining the Egyptian policy that the American press attacks, he remarks that: "Criticism can be accepted if it is designed to serve a common interest or express an objective view that is free from preconceptions." He notes that the press campaign is void of all that and that it is focusing on deliberately untrue interpretations, "ignoring the national interests that dictated such policies."

Explaining the motives for rapprochement with Libyan leader al-Qadhdhafi, he points out that Egypt sees in Libya a "buffer zone that can bar the march of terrorism from Algeria."

As far as the Middle East issue is concerned, he states that Egypt has not concealed its fears of a setback in the peace process "as a result of inadequate policies that refuse to see the need for recognizing equal rights for all parties concerned."

Moving on to the issue of economic reform, Ahmad says that the American criticism has overlooked the praise attributed in official U.S. reports to the economic reform policies in Egypt and "has focused on the issue of privatization, which is still being debated between Egypt and the IMF for reasons related to Egypt's national view of the circumstances governing this issue."

Makram Muhammad Ahmad deduces three "important points" from the American press campaign. The first is "the odd mixup between the concepts of ally and friend." Admitting that Egypt has distinctive ties with the United States, he points out that "this does not necessarily mean that they should see eye to eye on every single issue, since some Egyptian national and pan-Arab interests might not be identical with U.S. or Israeli ones."

Where the Lockerbie issue is concerned, he explains that Egypt has not asked for tolerating terrorism or exempting the defendants from a trial. "It only has called for handling the issue rationally in a manner that guarantees punishment for the real culprits and preserves the rights of all concerned without creating a new cause for tension."

The second point he deduces is the U.S. "constant attempt to wipe out the Arab role and the clear disregard for the increasing role Arab public opinion plays in developing government stances." He also sees a "semi-deliberate" insistence on making concessions exclusive to Arabs and on forcing them to accept a fait acomplis as a sign of goodwill. "Stranger still is that the Israeli gate should become the only one for enhanced relations with the United States, in spite of the enormity of joint Arab-American interests," he says.

Pointing out the risks involved in these practices, he says that they help develop "a growing antipathy toward the West;" deepen the feeling of a lack of international justice; and provide a fertile soil for rejectionist, violent, and extremist thought. "These phenomena certainly do not serve comprehensive peace, the region's stability, or the long-term Arab-American relations," Ahmad remarks.

The third point is that Egypt "knows better" when it comes to its national issues. Admitting that the Americans have the means to know facts, events, and figures,

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he believes that "this is not enough to realize the dimensions of the picture," where selling the public sector is concerned. He adds that economic reform in Egypt succeeded because it adopted an Egyptian approach that agreed with the community's circumstances and capabilities. "Had Egypt accepted the IMF prescription unchanged, the economic reform march would not have achieved the big success cited in the IMF and many U.S. agencies' reports," he remarks.

Enumerating the aspects of that "big success," he notes that the budget and balance of payments deficits are no longer on the agenda of the Egyptian-IMF talks, since both problems have been solved. He also notes "major reforms" in the money market and the liberation of interest rates.

He points out that "the dispute between Egypt and the IMF" is now limited to two issues only: The value of the Egyptian pound and the privatization of the public sector.

He explains that while the IMF sees a need to devalue the pound against the U.S. dollar, Egypt believes that this will only lead to a price hike and inflation on the local market, leading investments to diminish for fear of fluctuations in the exchange market.

As for the second point of dispute with the IMF, Makram Muhammad Ahmad points out that the IMF believes in the need to speed up the sale of the public sector, while Egypt prefers to proceed slowly and gradually to protect taxpayers investments and avoid uncalled for social repercussions.

Going back to the American press campaign, the writer says: "Although Egypt and the IMF have agreed to continue their debate on this issue in a new round of talks scheduled to begin next week, some American pens picked up this story and made it material for slander, relying on untrue information and interpretations. The strangest of these is the interpretation that affirms that ministers and senior officials in Egypt have a personal interest in slowing down the sale of the public sector because they get hefty salaries from these companies. That is why they want to maintain them despite their continuous losses to protect their individual interests. The truth is that no official in the Egyptian Government takes a single penny from the public sector. Moreover, the salaries and premiums the public sector managers receive are less than half of those received by their colleagues in the private sector."

The chief editor concludes that for Egypt the point is to enhance the operating efficiency of these investments, expand their revenue, and find the optimal approach to this end within the framework of a national program that takes the Egyptian social circumstances into consideration and preserves the interests of its workers and people. "Egypt alone will bear the national and political responsibility for that program," he says.

Columnist: U.S. Government Not Behind Press Attacks

NC0512183294 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 30 Nov 94 p 12

[Column by Muhammad al-Hayawan: "A Word of Love"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. press is not controlled or subsidized by the government. There is no information minister in the United States who gives instructions that the press must respect, heed, and implement. For example, the U.S. press attacks the U.S. President, who does not antagonize it, boycott it, complain about it, or accuse it of distorting his image in the world. The U.S. President has been accused of having relations with several women. His wife has been accused of receiving commissions on a water project when he was governor. He ordered the formation of a fact-finding committee, which will submit its report to the public. He did not confiscate the newspapers that reported these matters. Therefore, the U.S. press attack on Egypt does not mean that it is following instructions from the U.S. Government and that there is a new crisis between Egypt and the United States.

In fact, the crisis is old. Two years ago I referred to this crisis several times. I said that the cause of the crisis was [the plight of] democracy in Egypt and that there is a possibility that the United States will cut its aid to this country while continuing it to Israel because the United States considers Israel a democratic country in which governments change following elections. When I said this, I did not get exclusive information from the U.S. intelligence community, I was just a good reader of the bulletins distributed by the U.S. Embassy to most journalists. These bulletins repeatedly said that U.S. congressional committees held several meetings attended by U.S. State Department officials to discuss the Middle East issue and U.S. aid. At each meeting, the U.S. State Department affirmed that the aid was linked to the application of democracy and human rights. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. mission is to spread democracy and cooperation "only" with democratic regimes. The United States views undemocratic regimes suspiciously and considers them to be unstable.

In the United States there are institutes and centers that specialize in spreading democracy. These institutes contributed considerably to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The U.S. conditions for the surrender of Germany and Japan was the application of democracy and the preparation of a constitution that respects human rights. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the revolutionary forces lost their sponsor and had no alternative but to surrender to democracy as a worldwide trend that sweeps away everything in its path.

What the U.S. press publishes is one thing, while U.S. policy is something else. The United States links aid and support to the application of democracy because it is the only guarantee for the people's prosperity.

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AL-AHRAM on Israeli 'Inflexibility' Toward Syria

NC0612080894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0602 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA)—AL-AHRAM asserts that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of Syria and Israel, which begins today, is the result of Israeli inflexibility and Israel's attempt to put more pressure on the Syrian leadership.

In its editorial today the paper notes that since the bilateral negotiations between Syria and Israel discontinued in Washington in February, the United States has mediated between the two countries' political leaders. This, the paper adds, was expected to make things easier on this track but recent events and developments clearly indicated Israel's deliberate effort to show more inflexibility toward Syria.

The paper says these developments led to the Syrian leadership's resentment and assertion that maintaining the current situation is better for Syria than responding to the Israeli demands.

The paper points out that the continuing deadlock on the Syrian-Israeli track delays any talk of a genuine peace in the region. It asserts that there will be no durable peace in the region without Syria, that the Arab countries support Syria's fair right to regain its territories, and that this is what President Mubarak stressed during his recent visit to Damascus.

Morocco

'Sources' Refuse To Say If Saddam Will Attend Summit

MM0512144794 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by Talhah Jibril: "Speculation About Saddam's Possible Participation in Islamic Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rabat—Moroccan sources declined yesterday to provide any clarifications about Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's possible participation in the Islamic summit scheduled to be held in Casablanca 13-14 December. However, the sources confirmed that last Thursday Iraqi President Saddam Husayn received Moroccan Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Abdelkebir Alaoui M'Daghri, who handed him a message from King Hassan II inviting him to attend the summit.

In the same context Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said yesterday that a delegation representing the Iraqi leadership would participate in the summit, and that it would hold meetings with a number of Arab and Muslim officials, focusing on the issue of lifting the sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations.

'Aziz praised the "positive position" adopted by Morocco toward Baghdad.

As is known, Moroccan-Iraqi contacts continued during and after the Gulf crisis, and Morocco mediated between Iraq and Kuwait to solve the Kuwaiti prisoners problem. [passage omitted]

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Saudi Arabia

Official Denies Qatari Border Incidents

LD0612015394 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0050 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 5 Dec (SPA)—The director general of the Saudi border guards responded to a question by the Saudi News Agency on statements made by His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, Qatari minister of foreign affairs, in an interview he gave to Radio London [not further identified] Sunday [4 December]. The director general said: The incidents mentioned by his excellency have been strictly investigated and we have ascertained that none of the incidents mentioned by the representatives of the State of Qatar in the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in Riyadh or those reported to the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs took place. Hence, there has been no firing from the Saudi side against anybody.

He went on to say: A Saudi official source stressed, in a statement published by Saudi Arabia on 1 December, a complete denial of what was published by the Qatari News Agency on 30 November on clarifications made by His Excellency Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, Qatari interior minister, to the Qatari cabinet on the aforementioned incidents.

The director general of the Saudi border guard added: Regarding what was said by the Qatari minister of foreign affairs in his statement to London radio Sunday that Qatari people had been detained for about two weeks in Saudi Arabia, it has become clear, following a thorough investigation, that there are no Qatari detainees in Saudi Arabia. This is for clarification.

Information Minister Reviews Cabinet Meeting

LD0612040994 Riyadh SPA in English 1954 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Dec 5, SPA—The council of ministers held its weekly regular session here on Monday [5 December] under the chairmanship of Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and commander of the national guard.

At the outset of the meeting, Information Minister 'Ali al-Sha'ir told Saudi Press Agency that the cabinet reviewed reports on the latest and most important political, security and economic developments in Arab and international arenas.

Crown Prince Abdallah briefed the cabinet on Saudi Arabia's positions on these events. He lauded the the noble initiatives made by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz towards some brotherly countries which were affected by the natural disasters during recent times.

Referring to arrangements underway for the convention of the 7th Islamic summit in Casablanca later this month, Crown Prince Abdallah emphasized the keen interest of the Kingdom to see a successful outcome of the meeting to be held from December 13 to 14.

Crown Prince Abdallah commended the faithful efforts being made by King Fahd and King Hassan of Morocco and the rest of the Islamic leaders to serve Arab and Islamic causes.

In this context, al-Sha'ir said the cabinet expressed hope that the Moslem leaders would be able to realise aspirations of the Islamic nation and amass support for its decisive causes.

The cabinet was briefed by Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the minister of interior on some achievements accomplished by the Interior Ministry in the framework of the wise directives of King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdallah including what has been done for the issue of overstayers.

For his part, Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister made some clarifications on the current political events of Arab and international arenas including the latest developments of the Bosnian crisis.

Al-Sha'ir said the cabinet also discussed a number of domestic items on the session's agenda, especially those which related to on-going efforts to promote health, administrative and other services sectors and listened to comments made by the concerned ministers.

United Arab Emirates

Islands Dispute Referred to International Court

LD0512230494 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 2115 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 5 Dec—Sayf Sa'id, the undersecretary of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in the United Arab Emirates, said here tonight that his country has decided to refer the case of its three islands occupied by Iran to the International Court of Justice to settle the dispute.

In a statement to the Kuwaiti news agency, KUNA, he said: The UAE has found itself forced to take this step after exhausting all ways of bilateral dialogue and peaceful efforts because of Iranian intransigence and its strong unwillingness to end its occupation of the three Islands.

Mr. Sa'id was speaking at the end of a meeting of GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] foreign undersecretaries, during which they discussed the remainder of the points on the agenda of the GCC foreign ministers 51st session due to be held in Manama on 17 December.

Iran has occupied the three UAE islands Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa since November 1971.

Sayf Sa'id, the UAE Foreign Ministry undersecretary, stressed that his country would accept beforehand any ruling reached by the International Court of Justice in

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the Hague in order to: Put an end to the problem of the Iranian occupation of the three UAE islands.

He described his country's move to refer the problem to the International Court of Justice as: A peaceful and positive step.

He said that the move was totally and fully supported by the Gulf Cooperation Council States, friendly and Arab countries.

In response to a question by KUNA, he stressed that the UAE has not accepted or approved any mediation by any third party regarding the issue of the islands, which is proved by all historical and official documents to belong to the UAE.

Mr. Sa'id stressed that his country was tied to Iran with traditional and historical ties and that differences between them were confined to the issue of the islands. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Air Djibouti Plane Hijacked; Ethiopian Held

JN0512123694 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1203 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Statement issued by "a responsible Interior Ministry source"; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] A plane of [word indistinct] 410 type belonging to Air Djibouti, which was on its way from Barbara to Borema on a domestic flight in Somalia [as heard], with four passengers on board, has been hijacked and forced to change its destination toward Jeddah. The plane was not able to pursue its flight in view of the lack of fuel. For humanitarian reasons, Yemeni authorities allowed the plane to make a forced landing at Aden airport to refuel.

After contacting the hijacker, the security authorities, in cooperation with Aden airport authorities, arrested the hijacker, (Ila ukwa), an Ethiopian, 27 years old, in a peaceful manner onboard the plane.

The hijacker boarded the plane with the ticket of another passenger. He had a hand grenade [indistinct words] carried by his wife who was accompanying him. The security authorities decided to conduct the necessary investigation of this incident.

The responsible source said the Yemeni security authorities reject this terrorist action.

Intertribal Clashes Leave 'Dozens' Dead

MM0612085794 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 4 Dec 94 p1

[Report by Iqbal 'Ali 'Abdallah: "Yemen: Dozens of Casualties in Tribal Clashes in al-Jawf"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa—Responsible security sources yesterday confirmed that "dozens have been killed and hundreds wounded in the current clashes in al-Jawf Governorate (north of Sanaa)."

In a statement to AL-HAYAH yesterday, they said that "clashes broke out between members of the Al Hamad Dhu-Husayn and Bani Nawf tribes for reasons of venedettas and a long-standing dispute between the two tribes over a piece of land."

They added that "the state and neighboring tribes to the Al Hamad and Bani Nawf tribes have been unable to stop the clashes, which began on 8 July—that is, one day after the government forces' triumph over the [Yemeni] Socialist Party in Aden." They further said that "members of both tribes got large quantities of arms from arsenals in Aden for use in the current clashes, including MT-23, MT-37 guns, 120 mm mortars, Dushkas, other modified weapons, and personnel mines."

A number of the governorate's officials contacted the day before yesterday said that "the clashes reached villages and farms, destroyed water pumps and power generators, and killed hundreds of cattle in addition to the dozens of people killed and hundreds wounded from both tribes."

They also confirmed that "most of the clashes are near state camps and positions, with some government soldiers involved on both sides."

Military sources maintain that "vendettas and disputes over land in al-Jawf Governorate are old and difficult to solve peacefully without serious intervention by sizable government forces to end the tragedy, which has been very detrimental to the people of the governorate and the country's reputation in the 20th century." [passage omitted]

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UN Envoy Message Complains of U.S. 'Aggression'

NC0512203294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1900 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 5 Dec (INA)—Iraq has strongly condemned the U.S. act of aggression against the Iraqi ship al-Tharthar and the tugboat al-Hijran, holding the U.S. Government fully responsible for the repercussions of that aggression.

This came in an official message Iraq's permanent envoy, Ambassador Nazar Hamdum, sent today to the UN Security Council chairman for this month, the Rwandan ambassador.

Iraq asked the UN Security Council chairman to condemn these criminal acts and take measures to stop them and avoid their recurrence.

He pointed out that an American force of three military helicopters conducted a landing on board the Iraqi water tanker "al-Tharthar" and the tugboat "al-Hijran" on 1 December, as they were docked near the Iraqi port of al-'Amiq.

He added that the American helicopters landed 10 soldiers, who fired at the crews of the water tanker and tugboat and led them along a distance of 20 km south, escorted by a U.S. naval unit.

Iraq affirmed in its message that the American military force manhandled the Iraqi crews and questioned them about the length and width of the tanker, the type of its cargo, the number of its crew, and its ownership before releasing it with the tugboat the next day, 2 December.

Iraq pointed out that this unjustified U.S. military aggression is a blatant violation of the provisions and rules of the UN Charter and international law, as well as of the cease-fire agreement. It confirms that the U.S. Government is determined to seize any opportunity to commit aggression against Iraq and violate the integrity of its water, land, and airspace.

English Daily Rejects U.S. Search of Ships

JN0512132694 Baghdad INA in English 1040 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Dec 5, INA—U.S. forces on December 1st committed an act of piracy against two Iraqi tankers, the water tanker al-Tharthar and the tug boat al-Hijran near al-'Amiq port, THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER said.

In its today editorial, the paper added that this latest unwarranted U.S. aggression is in line with the cowboy mentality that governs the behaviour of U.S. personnel, whether military or civilian.

This cowboy mentality along with the lack of ethical deterant characterised U.S. behaviour both internally and around the globe.

This same mentality resulted in the extinction of an entire population of the indigenous red Indian in North America.

The cowboy mentality armed with the most sophisticated weapons played havoc in various parts of the world, particularly in Japan, Vietnam, Latin America and the Caribbean region and recently in Iraq, Somalia and Haiti.

However, the U.S. intransigence and cowboy mentality have been defeated in Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia And other parts of the world since it faced guerrilla wars for which it had no stomach.

Therefore, U.S. retreated from these places like a defeated dog running with tail between legs.

It is of utmost urgency that the United Nations denounced this latest U.S. reckless action because it represents a grave violation of Iraq's sovereignty and the terms of the ceasefire.

The U.S. cannot be allowed to dictate its terms and impose its will on the United Nations.

It is essential that the U.S. respects and creates respect for the UN Charter since it is a superpower and permenant member of the UN Security Council.

Instead the U.S. is trampling over the UN Charter. The U.S. is behaving like a world police following the collapse of the former U.S.S.R.

The U.S. is trying to subdue other small nations through terror, the use of force and economic blockade.

This savage policy runs contrary to its claim of being the leader of the so-called free and civilized world.

A civilized nation should always act with responsibility towards itself and the world at large regardless of its military might.

The UN Charter gives all nations the right to defend themselves against all acts of aggression and in the case of Iraq, it has shown that it is prepared to make all sacrifices necessary to guarantee its sovereignty and independence.

The people of Iraq will not be intimidated by such reckless policies of the type committed recently by U.S. forces against civilian tankers docked at Iraqi territrial waters.

However, it is clear that such reckless incursions cannot stop without putting and end to U.S. manipulation of the United Nations.

Iraq for its part will continue to resist all U.S. attempts to dictate its will on its people with the aim of putting its hands on the oil riches of the entire region, the paper emphasized.

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'Aziz Receives Russia's Yeltsin Letter to Saddam

JN0512191194 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1830 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 5 Dec (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has received a letter for President Saddam Husayn from Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

The letter was delivered by Nikolay Kartuzov, the Russian Federation ambassador in Baghdad, when he was received today by Tariq 'Aziz.

Saddam's Brother: Kuwait's Invasion 'Grave Mistake'

NC0512190094 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In the first admission of its kind by a high-level Iraqi official, Barazan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, the half-brother of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, has stated that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was a grave mistake.

Kuwait Blamed for Missing Persons Problem

NC0412094494 Paris AFP in English 0916 GMT 4 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Dec 4 (AFP)—Iraq on Sunday [4 December] blamed Kuwait for hindering efforts to resolve the question of Kuwaitis missing since the 1991 Gulf War, one of the obstacles to lifting the UN embargo on Baghdad.

The government daily AL-JUMHURIYAH said Baghdad had "fully cooperated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and had invited different commissions to carry out investigations across Iraq."

But "Kuwait had rejected all initiatives," it added.

It said the issue of the missing Kuwaitis as well as the questions of restoring Kuwaiti goods and human rights "were evoked by Washington and London as a diversion and disinformation."

It said accusations were levelled against Iraq about human rights whereas similar abuses in "countries neighbouring Iraq were ignored for political ends."

It called on the UN Security Council not to be led by the United States and Britain next Saturday when it reviews a report on Iraqi disarmament.

The two countries have led calls not to lift the crippling oil and trade embargo imposed on Iraq by the Security Council when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990, before being ousted seven months later.

The council has said Iraq has not complied with all the resolutions imposed on Baghdad for a lifting of the embargo.

It is due to debate a report by UN disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus.

UN resolutions for lifing the embargo include destroying weapons of mass destruction and setting up a long-term monitoring of Baghdad's arms capacity.

Iraq says it has complied with these as well as on November 10 recognising Kuwait's sovereignty and borders.

Despite the move, a key demand by the UN for lifting the sanctions, the embargo was renewed for a further two months by the Security Council on November 14.

Arab 'Collusion' with Israel, U.S. Opposed

JN0512105194 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 23 Nov 94 p 2

["Standpoint" column by Hadi Daniyal: "For the Sake of Effective Arab Popular Action"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Now that the official Arab position and its leanings have become completely clear, it is essential for the alternative Arab popular position to also be clarified.

The leanings of the former are official collusion with Washington and Tel Aviv in the aggression on Iraq and Libya and the continuous unfair blockade on both of these countries. The call for the cancellation of the Arab boycott of the Zionist entity and the violation of this boycott by some Arab regimes, coupled with the action taken by other Arab regimes in concluding and signing clear surrender agreements with the enemy of the nation, thus enabling this enemy to retroactively usurp the history of the nation, occupy its land, and violate its rights.

Since this is the official stand, dirty as it is, then an earnest and courageous initiative is required to come up with a popular stand to counter this official collapse in order to save the future of the nation from its fate at the hands of its enemies.

We have no doubt whatsoever about the real sentiments and feelings of our nation, in all Arab countries. In fact, we are wagering on this pan-Arab conscience, which must be exploited and led by national political forces, not official ones, in accordance with an effective and practical pan-Arab program and urgent salvation steps. Historically, people are not just numerical human bulk, but effective, influential, and enlightened forces. Therefore, it behooves these effective and qualified forces, not the others, to lead the popular movement.

It is in this context that we understand and support the call of the Democratic Nasirites Arab Party in Egypt for a general Arab popular conference embracing all Arab nationalist forces "to discuss the current deteriorating situation in the Arab arena and to confront the attempts to dissolve the Arabs with suspect Middle Eastern and regional relations."

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We view with appreciation the formation of a preparatory committee composed of leading Arab figures to prepare for this conference, which is scheduled to be held in the middle of December in Cairo. We hope this conference is the forerunner of several other Arab popular conferences in different Arab capitals, especially those whose rulers are deeply involved in the course of surrendering to the Zionist will. This is because the enemy camp is actively seeking to wipe out the Arab national identity and to replace it with a Middle Eastern or Mediterranean identity that includes the Zionist entity. This imperialist-Zionist-reactionary activity must be countered by a progressive pan-Arab popular activity in order to face the danger that threatens our nation's cultural existence.

This objective cannot be achieved by a conference with a purely propagandistic aim, as is often the case, but by a conference which is followed by a series of other conferences that have a general program and are committed to effective executive steps to foil the enemy plan, which is aimed at toppling our nation and canceling its role in the near and distant future of the region and the world.

Paper Accuses Saudis of 'Shameful' Plotting

NC0612084094 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0800 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 6 Dec (INA)—The paper AL-'IRAQ has criticized the Saudi rulers' suspicious role of aiming to make the Arab establishments submissive to their will in a way that contradicts the principles on which they were set up.

In an article by writer Yasin 'Ali Salih, the paper says today that the Saudi rulers are following the example of their masters in Washington. In the same way that the United States has turned the United Nations through blackmail and bribery into an international organization with no will of its own and incapable of truly expressing the peoples' desire to uphold independence and reject all forms of custodianship, mandate, and protection coming from outside a country's border, these rulers are using every means to make the Arab establishments submit to their wishes.

The paper asks whether it is Islamic to turn the land of Najd and Hejaz into an assembly point for aggression against Iraq, its people, and leadership.

It adds that it is both shameful and regrettable that some Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia, are continuing their attempt to form another anti-Iraqi alliance at the instigation of the United States to be clearly implemented by the agents in Riyadh.

It notes that the Saudi rulers have a full and shameful record of striking at the Arab and Islamic liberation movements and of plotting against nationalist leaders, as they did when they plotted against the 23 July 1852 revolution in Egypt, against the unitary state between Egypt and Syria, and against Yemeni's unity through financial and military support for the renegade 'Ali Salim al-Bid so as to turn the clock back.

The paper stresses that the Iraqis have crossed to the shore of safety and eternal stability through their resounding victory in the mother of battles and given the whole world shining proof of the greatness of sacrifice for the sake of the homeland's dignity and pride so that the land will remain sacrosanct and not desecrated by the feet of invaders or polluted by denigrating weapons.

Saddam Chairs Meeting of Ba'th Party Military Bureau

JN0412145894 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1440 GMT 4 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Dec (INA)—President Saddam Husayn, secretary of the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, has chaired a meeting of the members of the Ba'th Party Military Bureau.

Prisoners Without Trial Reportedly Being Executed

NC0312155094 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 3 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The ruling regime in Baghdad continues its execution campaign, started a few months ago, against detainees and political prisoners who have spent years in the regime's prisons without any mentionable trials. A report from Baghdad has said that many victims have recently been executed after sham trials. These victims come from the cities of al-'Amarah, al-Najaf, and some others in Iraq.

Baghdad Said To Be Arena for Opposition Activity

NC0312155194 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 3 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The sons of the tribes of Hajjam and Bani Asad in the Governorate of Dhi Qar have recently confronted a fierce attack by the forces of Saddam Husayn's regime. Opposition sources have affirmed that the sons of the two tribes managed to cause losses to the regime's forces. On the other hand, the city of Baghdad is increasingly becoming an arena for opposition activity. Reports have indicated that the regime's security forces in Baghdad are being forced to withdraw from the streets of the city during the night when the opposition forces increase their activities against the regime's security.

Group of Draftees Born in 1973 Demobilized

JN0512133594 Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic 24 Nov 94 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad (INA)—Pursuant to the orders of leader President Saddam Husayn and on

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the occasion of Martyr Day, the Ministry of Defense will begin as of 1 December 1994 demobilizing the third group of draftees born in 1973.

Staff Lieutenant General Ahmad Ibrahim Hammash, assistant chief of staff for administration, made this announcement to the Iraqi News Agency, adding that the first group of draftees born in 1974 will be released on 28 April 1995, the birthday of leader President Saddam Husayn, and the second group on 1 December of 1995. [passage omitted]

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Rabin Briefs Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee

On Talks With Palestinians

TA0512155794

[FBIS Editorial Report] Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el and Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 5 December report on Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's address to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee today.

Qol Yisra'el reports that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said "that the government must now decide whether to support a comprehensive settlement with the Palestinians, including elections and an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment, which will require a great deal of time because of our security needs. We will not hold up the agreement, but we are not running amok to implement it, the prime minister said. He stressed that we are not going to discuss the permanent settlement at this time and that the Palestinians have not asked us to do so. Israel, together with the Palestinians, is looking into whether recruiting more armed men to the Palestinian police force in the Gaza Strip is compatible with the agreement."

Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 5 December carries a report by Knesset correspondent Hadar Vismonsky on Prime Minister Rabin's remarks to the committee, noting that "Rabin does not believe hermetic separation between Israel and the territories is feasible. Fences are impractical, he says. The reality in the territories cannot be controlled.

"Rabin disclosed that the government has allocated 31 million shekels for the construction of new roads that will bypass large cities in the territories.

"Rabin further said: We cannot help it, but some settlements were established and built on political grounds, although their location is catastrophic from the security point of view."

Vismonsky reports that "Rabin is still dissatisfied with the Palestinian Authority's [PA] performance." In a recorded passage, Rabin says: "The PA has existed for eight months. It is suffering both growing and confrontation pains. I expect it to show better results in two spheres: the war on terror, and the administration of their domestic economic affairs."

The report adds that the prime minister also "elaborated on the term Lebanonization in Gaza, which was coined by security elements. The prime minister said: 'Arafat is arming Fatah groups in order to deter his opponents, although this contravenes the Oslo agreement. "

On Negotiations With Syria

TA0512171894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Report by David Ze'ev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An official source says Prime Minister Rabin told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the dialogue with the Syrians has stopped, the Syrians contending that the stalemate is due to leaks in the media. Rabin says the Syrian approach remains: Only open negotiations in Washington. But to us, says the Israeli prime minister, it is clear what will happen as soon as we get to the issue of the withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Rabin says gaps exist in almost every area. Israel's security demands are to prevent border incidents, to mutually prevent sudden attacks, and to reduce the overall security burden.

The prime minister made it clear that he supports stationing American troops on the Golan when and if, in his words, we reach a peace agreement with Syria.

On the reported comments of the incoming army chief of staff, General Amnon Shahaq, against American troops on the Heights, Rabin said: I don't know that he is against it. In any case, I am for it.

The prime minister said he is not happy with the three-way alliance that has formed of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Rabin said it encourages the Syrians, and he will raise the issue with the Americans. [passage omitted]

Prime Minister Rabin walked a tight rope again of committing to the peace process but not ruling out changes to the Declaration of Principles [DOP], and certainly not in any rush to implement it. In fact, he said, it will take a long time. But, Rabin denied that he was preparing the Israeli public for a suspension of the negotiations.

[Begin Rabin recording] No, I'm committed, as the Government of Israel is committed, to the continuation of the negotiations, but no doubt that we'll have to bear in mind the lessons that we have learned so far. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Rabinovich Report Denies Stalemate in Syria Talks

TA0512190694 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel's Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich said today there is no stalemate in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that, in a report transmitted to Jerusalem, the ambassador said that the harsh remarks by al-Asad and Rabin cast a shadow over the atmosphere, but do not reflect the real condition of the negotiations.

Rabin Discusses 'Terrorism,' Internal Issues

TA0412120894 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 4 Dec 94 p 9

[Report by Menahem Rahat]

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[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin noted that the difference between fanatical terrorism, which draws its roots from Islamic fundamentalism, and the terrorism waged by the PLO is in the use of suicide attackers.

Appearing on 2 December before the Editors' Board in Tel Aviv, Rabin said that it was difficult to fight suicide terrorists. "Whoever embarks on such a mission knows that he is a human bomb, and truly believes that his soul goes straight to heaven. We did not encounter this kind of terrorist attack in the past."

Rabin pointed out that 69 Israelis have been killed in terrorist attacks this year as opposed to 62 in 1993. This year, however, 40 of the fatalities were killed in suicide attacks. Rabin nevertheless rejected any halt to the peace process. "Any attempt to stop the peace process would be granting a victory to terrorism, and any sign of weakness on our part will only lead to an increase in terrorist attacks."

Rabin said that it was not 'Arafat, al-Asad, al-Hirawi, Egypt, or Jordan who were the enemies of peace, stability, and security, rather a wave of Islamic fundamentalism was threatening Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Turkey and other Arab countries as well as Europe and the United States. Its source, Rabin said, is Iran which is accumulating conventional and nonconventional weapons. "This is the most serious threat to the present and to the future."

As for peace with Jordan, Rabin expressed the belief that "this peace would prove more implementable than peace with Egypt. I am referring to its impact on Jordanian and Israeli citizens, economic cooperation, and joint projects."

The prime minister also commented on the recently prevailing sense of economic difficulty among the Israeli public. Rabin quoted the verse: "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked;" [Deutronomy 32: 15], and said: There is no doubt that the Israeli public has become fat and kicks in all directions."

Rabin cynically added: "I arrived late due to traffic jams in Tel Aviv. What poor people. The economic situation is unbearable. Approximately 120,000 new cars are sold each year. Approximately 1.5 million Israelis go abroad every year. There is no other country in the world where over 30 percent of its residents travel. If we were the United States, there would be 80 million people leaving the country."

As for all the reports about "malfunctions" in his cabinet, Rabin said: "All this talk about malfunctions is nonsense. Do not bother me with all this rubbish about malfunctions. Clearly, there are occasional mishaps but one must look at the big picture. In our party, there is a group of relatively old people who still consider themselves young. They are frustrated. At their age, I was already prime minister, and I understand them. They also want the job. These, however, are minor things."

Rabin added: "A statesmen is not judged by such rubbish or the talk of idle gossipers. A statemen is judged by the results he achieves. The government will be tested not by gossip or occasional quarrels but by the results of its work."

Commenting on reports about polls indicating a drop in his popularity as well as that of the Labor Party, Prime Minister Rabin said: "I do not care what the polls say. As long as I enjoy a majority—and a majority of one vote is still a majority—I will continue to pursue the policy I believe in." Rabin went on to explain that "a prime minister and his cabinet must remain true to their positions, regardless of whether or not they are popular. The test of the government will be promoting peace while preserving security and scoring social and economic accomplishments."

Peres: Chances of Progress With Syria Soon 'Small'

TA0512172194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said in Budapest that the chances of making progress in the peace process with Syria soon are small. Minister Peres met with the Egyptian foreign minister, who expressed concern about the future of the peace process if an arrangement is not found between Israel and Syria in the coming months.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher left Budapest for Damascus and will arrive in Israel tomorrow. On Wednesday [7 December], he will meet with 'Arafat in Gaza.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1605 GMT on 5 December in a report by Yo'av Limor adds that "Peres is now meeting with the foreign ministers of four Mediterranean states—Algiers, Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt—as well as the troika from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe taking place in Budapest. Earlier, Peres met at length with Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahya and they agreed that interests offices will be opened very soon in both countries. It was decided at the meeting that senior representatives of both countries would meet in Brussels next week to work out the final operational details on the opening of the offices."]

Peres on Syria, Hopes for Christopher Tour

TA0612082594 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 6 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Mikha Friedman on 6 December; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Friedman] Good morning, sir.

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[Peres] Good morning.

[Friedman] On one hand, we have President al-Asad's remarks, made only two or three days ago, that he prefers the status quo over compliance with Israel's demands, and on the other, we have the remarks of Syrian Ambassador in Washington Walid al-Mu'allim to the effect that the time left for the attainment of an agreement should be measured in months rather than in years. Which of these two statements should we take into account?

[Peres] The problem is not statements but positions. Their position remains that we must first accept all of Syria's demands and only then enter negotiations. No country in the world would accept such a condition. Negotiations begin with opening positions. Each side is entitled to propose its own opening positions, and this is then followed by negotiations. What the Syrians want is for us to first announce that we accept all their positions and then enter negotiations, and there is no chance of our doing that.

[Friedman] On a scale ranging from frenzy to total freeze, where would you place the negotiations between Israel and Syria?

[Peres] For some reason, the Syrians have the feeling that they are doing someone a favor. Peace is not about doing favors; peace is the recognition that all other alternatives are simply illogical and that their price is intolerable. Unless the Syrians reach this conclusion, it will be very hard to negotiate with them. Their conduct is based on the premise that the whole world owes them, and we do not quite understand why we owe them anything. We want to make peace with them but on the basis of reasonable conditions through fair negotiations.

[Friedman] Does Hafiz al-Asad know the depth of the withdrawal Israel is prepared to carry out in return for a maximum of peace, even if this has not been spelled out publicly, as Syria is demanding?

[Peres] He can guess, but we will not inform him in advance. As I said before, we will not start negotiations by accepting all the Syrian positions.

[Friedman] Assuming that Christopher would not waste his time and set out on yet another doomed shuttle mission in the Middle East, are there any grounds for optimism about the outcome of the mission he is beginning today?

[Peres] I believe Christopher will convey to the Syrians the reality of the positions. The Americans, too, are not proposing that someone accept the position that one side should launch the negotiations by accepting the views of the other side. Maybe common sense will prevail.

[Friedman] A new stage in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians pertaining to the interim arrangement opens today in Cairo. One view has it that neither side will want to toughen their positions prior to the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Oslo on Saturday and that the discussions opening today are only of a formal nature. What do you think?

[Peres] I do not think we are influenced by the Nobel Peace Prize award, and this issue should not be blown out of proportion. I think we should continue to talk with the Palestinians and, at the same time, meticulously look after Israel's security needs.

[Friedman] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, thank you very much.

Peres Comments on Peace Process, 'Terrorism'

BR0512155194 Madrid ABC in Spanish 4 Dec 94 pp 12-14

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Isabel San Sebastian; place and date not given: "I Told Felipe Gonzalez: For Years You Have Been Helping the PLO. Why Not Give Them Economic Aid Now?"—first two paragraphs are ABC introduction"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A civilian in a land of solidiers, a fervent advocate of dialogue in a country which much too frequently has only allowed weapons to speak, a dove (albeit a more agile than fragile one) in a sky full of hawks, his name will be recorded in the great book of history in the place of honor reserved for those who worked for peace. Subtle, cultivated, a master in the art of negotiation in all its forms, fond of poetry as much as of politics, to which he has devoted almost his entire life, 71-year old Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, who recently received the Nobel prize for peace together with [PLO leader] Yasir 'Arafat and [Israeli Prime Minister] Isaac Rabin—with whom he is almost permanently struggling for control of the Labor Party—has acquired the stature of a statesman through many a political battle. And he behaves as such.

There is a marked contrast between his calm gaze, his almost melancholic and gentle eyes, and the energy emanating from his words. Another striking contrast is that between his smiling face and soft-spoken manner, on the one hand, and the uncompromising forcefulness of his statements, on the other. Finally, the venerable white-haired character in a grey suit who received me punctually in a comfortable and luxurious hotel room does not quite tally with the large number of armed and vigilant bodyguards deployed outside, equipped with state-of-the-art anti-terrorist technology, and with a forbidding look in their eye. But there is nothing new in all this, given that Israel is undoubtedly a realm of contrasts, and Shim'on Peres could well be its king.

Jordan, Syria, Palestine

[San Sebastian] Considering developments over the past few months, do you today regard the creation of an independent Palestinian state as a more real or, on the contrary, a more remote possibility than one year ago, when the peace agreements were signed?

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[Peres] Just like one year ago, it is today too early to speak of a permanent and definitive solution. You see, we have to bridge a very wide gap, and this can be done in either of two ways: by using a map, or by establishing a timetable. If we had chosen the map, we would have come up against a crisis immediately. This is why we opted for the timetable over a two-year period, so as to improve the situation gradually and create a favorable climate for finding a solution.

[San Sebastian] By the way, is there a chance that Jordan may play a role in finding such a solution and in Palestine's future, in the shape of a federation, confederation, or some other type of association?

[Peres] In my opinion, this would be the best solution: a Jordanian-Palestinian federation, instead of a probable confrontation between the two.

[San Sebastian] Do the Jordanians and Palestinian favor this solution?

[Peres] Sometimes they say yes, and sometimes they say no, depending on their mood. For us, in any case, this would certainly be the best solution under the circumstances.

[San Sebastian] Is this solution provided for in the peace treaty recently signed with Jordan?

[Peres] No. Each of the two signatories of that treaty retains full independence to decide on its future.

[San Sebastian] Will King Husayn ever witness the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Syria?

[Peres] I believe the king is in excellent health, so he might well witness such a treaty.

[San Sebastian] If some sort of negotiation with Damascus were under way, you would not tell me, would you?

[Peres] Yes, I would tell you, but I can assure you there is nothing that could be called a serious negotiation. The process is practically at a standstill, and negotiations are taking place at a very low level between professional diplomats who, unlike ministers, are not entitled to make mistakes. But no progress is possible in a negotiation without mistakes.

'Arafat's Problems, Rabin's Difficulties

[San Sebastian] Many observers believe there is a growing danger of a civil war developing in the Palestinian self-rule areas. Do you share this concern?

[Peres] There are dangers everywhere. No doubt 'Yasir is facing many difficulties. But he must establish his authority at all costs.

[San Sebastian] Do you not believe that the best way of allowing him to establish his authority is by holding elections?

[Peres] Yes, this would be a very good way; but we have a serious security problem, and we have well- founded reasons to fear that, if we withdraw from the areas that we are currently patrolling, Hamas's terrorist actions may cause more victims. This is why we are conducting negotiations on how the Palestinians can hold their elections without thereby failing to guarantee the safety of all the inhabitants in the Palestine self-rule areas, including both the Palestinian population and the Israeli settlers.

[San Sebastian] This is "the" problem, right? The future of the settlements...

[Peres] The real problem are relations between Jews and Arabs. If these relations were different...

[San Sebastian] Has any trust been built between the two sides over the past year? Has anything been achieved to bridge the gap?

[Peres] No. I am afraid that relations are frozen. The only ascertainable progress lies perhaps in the fact that today there are more Arabs and Jews who are in favor of furthering the peace process than ever before in our history .

[San Sebastian] Is Israel prepared to speed up the release of Palestinian prisoners so as to placate the most radical elements in the Gaza strip?

[Peres] We have already released many, some of whom have again committed offences and have ended up in jail again. At present, only those whose hands are bloodstained or who refuse to repent are being held in prison, and they will continue to be held unless they change their attitude. Do not forget that we are also being accused, in Israel, of freeing people who then attempt on our people's lives, and there is a lot of opposition to this policy.

[San Sebastian] The Labor Party has, in fact, lost considerable support in Israeli society following the latest terrorist actions. Will it be able, despite this, to fulfil the peace agreements and eventually sign new agreements?

[Peres] Yes. You know what they say: Opinion polls are like perfume: pleasant to smell, but dangerous to swallow. Besides, a government should not necessarily aim to be popular, but rather, to act correctly. Perhaps a government's true worth can be assessed, precisely, from its performance in dealing with unpopular issues, and, in this sense, it is best to do the right thing than to be satisfied with opinion polls.

[San Sebastian] But will the voters allow you to go ahead?

[Peres] I believe so.

[San Sebastian] What if Likud [Unity—National Liberal Party] wins in the next elections?

[Peres] Israeli society would have made a mistake. However, I believe that they would have no choice but to go ahead with our plan, because history is not like a car: It has no reverse gear. On the other hand, I am convinced

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that we live in a period in which war makes no sense, because nothing that really counts or is important can be achieved by force of arms.

[San Sebastian] Is it easy for this principle to be accepted by a society, such as Israel's, that has achieved everything it has got precisely through war?

[Peres] This is untrue. We have achieved what we have thanks to our work and our technological capabilities. It is not war which enables Israel to be a strong country; but rather, our scientific capabilities and our people's education. The same applies throughout the world: Russia is a huge country with many problems, Japan is a small country but very strong.

Dollars Against Integrationism

[San Sebastian] Is the lack of economic resources Palestine's main problem at present, as 'Arafat says?

[Peres] I am convinced this is so. I am convinced that many Hamas activists are not there for ideological reasons, but for economic reasons closely related to unemployment, and I am convinced that the best way of strengthening Yasir 'Arafat's authority is by contributing to improve the Palestine Authority's economic situation.

[San Sebastian] Therefore peace is in the West's hands?

[Peres] That is correct. As a matter of fact, I have told many premiers, including [Spanish Prime Minister] Felipe Gonzalez: For years you have been supporting the PLO. We have now signed a peace treaty and taken on important commitments. What about you? Why do you not come out onto the stage and give your friend 'Arafat a hand?

[San Sebastian] What did Gonzalez answer?

[Peres] That I was right, and that he would do what he could. You see, there are at least six different Socialist governments in Europe that should get together and reach an agreement to help the PLO now so as to provide 'Araft with the resources he needs to overcome this difficult situation.

[San Sebastian] And what should the West do in the face of the alarming escalation of fundamentalism throughout the Islamic world?

[Peres] To begin with, understand that fundamentalism is not a way of practicing religion, but rather, a protest against deprivation and marginalization, and this is expressed differently in different countries. Therefore I am convinced that the higher these people's living standards rise, the more the level of fundamentalism and violence will drop.

[San Sebastian] So, once again, the main issue is economic aid...

[Peres] Ecomic aid is one of the most important forms of aid I can think of. Perhaps there may be other ways of helping, too. But this is the main one.

[San Sebastian] Nevertheles, Iran is a wealthy country...

[Peres] Since Khamene'i, things have not been going too well for it. Thanks to his demographic policy, the population has increased by 22 million people without the necessary infrastructures having been created to cope with this, and unemployment and inflation are rampant.

Terror Sponsors

[San Sebastian] Speaking of Iran, a few days ago—precisely in Spain—Yasir 'Arafat accused Tehran of supporting Hamas—something which former President Haim Herzog had already told me a few months ago. Exactly what sort of help is Tehran providing for the terrorists, Minister Peres, and what is Israel doing about it?

[Peres] Iran is financing, training, and arming Hamas terrorists. This is the sort of help it is providing. It then lies and rejects all accusations to this effect. This is how the Iranians operate. Israel is too small a country to act on its own, but the United States are promoting a containment and pressure policy to prevent both Iran and Iraq from spreading terrorism throughout the world. The problem is that not all Europeans seem to agree with this, and some are practicing what they call "controlled dialogue," although, frankly, we fail to see exactly where control comes into it. I hope these Europeans will reconsider what they are doing, because every time a terrorist action takes place in the world, Iran's long arm is most probably hiding behind it.

[San Sebastian] What European countries are providing Tehran with help, and what sort of help?

[Peres] Germany has just re-negotiated, with Iran, the latter's outstanding debt. Japan is providing economic aid. These countries, and others, continue to act as if Iran were an innocent country.

[San Sebastian] Are arms being sold to Iran?

[Peres] I believe talks are under way with Russia, but I do not have all the information available. I do know, however, that they are currently using, and supplying terrorists with, the arms they bought from North Korea, and they are trying to build nuclear plants.

[San Sebastian] Is Israel prepared to repeat the sort of action it took in the past against the Osiraq plant, in Iraq, and strike any targets it thinks fit?

[Peres] It is not military pressure we must bring to bear on Iran, but economic pressure. We must tell Iran: If you do not pull out from the business of terrorism and stop having a terminal in every criminal and subversive organization in the world, you will not be able to enjoy normal trade relations.

[San Sebastian] Are Iraq, Syria, and Libya also promoting international terrorism?

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[Peres] Iraq is currently under control, but if control eases up, Sadam Hussein will go back to his old business. Perhaps Syria is not giving any support, but neither is it doing anything against the Hizbolah, and Damascus is still the headquarters of all the Palestinian groups that are opposed to the peace process.

[San Sebastian] Has the setback suffered by President Clinton's Administration in the latest elections affected its mediating role in the Middle East to any appreciable extent?

[Peres] I do not believe so. As far as the Middle East is concerned, and Israel in particular, we have not noticed any change.

Sarid: 'No Hesitations' on Oslo Implementation

TA0612101794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yosi Sarid said the government has no hesitations whatsoever about continuing to implement the Oslo accord and is determined to pursue the process even more intensely.

Our correspondent Nati Zilberman reports that during a tour of the Western Galilee, Minister Sarid emphasized that the negotiations with Syria have not run into a dead end and that he believes the expected breakthrough in this sphere will be made next year.

Suggestion To Withdraw MFO From Sinai Opposed

TA0412112894 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Dec 94

[Report by political correspondent Shim'onn Schiffer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Egypt suggests withdrawing the Multinational Force and Observers [MFO] which is supposed to make sure that Israel and Egypt do not violate the military annex of the peace accord. Israel and the United States are opposed.

The Egyptians raised the suggestion several days ago in a meeting in Rome with the MFO commander.

Jerusalem received a secret report on the meeting and the Egyptian proposal "to change the character of the force; instead of a deployment throughout Sinai, the observers would only be deployed along the border."

In an attempt to reassure Israel, it was proposed that doing away with the force would not happen all at once, but over five years.

Israel and the United States are opposed to any change in the mandate of the MFO, which constitutes one of the main components of the Israeli-Egyptian peace accord.

Senior Israeli political sources view the Egyptian initiative with concern since it adds to a long list of Egyptian initiatives, all negative from Israel's point of view.

The sources believe that Egypt is interested in ending the force's deployment in Sinai because it believes the MFO's continued presence harms Egyptian sovereignty.

Egypt gave as the official reason for its proposal the difficulties in finding funding for the force. The Egyptians are also proposing that the MFO's command be transferred from Rome to al-'Aqabah or Amman.

The report presented to Israeli policymakers also says the United States has decided to replace the American battalion in Sinai with and a Civil Guard battalion.

The Americans said too many American troops were required this year to assist in upholding international agreements around the world.

The concern in Israel over the Egyptian move takes on another dimension in view of the fact that the prime minister has brought up the presence of the multinational force in Sinai as an example of what he is aspiring for in an agreement with Syria.

Map of West Bank 'Security Zones' Detailed

TA0612093394 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 6 Dec 94

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has drawn up a map of the security zones Israel will have to hold on to in Judaea and Samaria under any arrangement with the Palestinians. These are zones which, in the IDF's view, Israel must hold on to from the security point of view. This is not a political position, political sources in Jerusalem stressed, but the translation of military recommendations into a map of the field.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal was quoted by THE JERUSALEM POST yesterday as saying that the map had been formulated in recent security deliberations in anticipation of the resumption of the negotiations with the PLO.

We have learned that the map includes the following Israeli- controlled blocs: the 'Etzyon Bloc; the metropolitan Jerusalem area, including Ma'ale Adumim; the Jordan Rift Valley; and a security strip in Samaria, west [as heard] of the Green Line, based around Alfey Menashe.

The map will serve as the basis for any arrangement with the Palestinians, sources in Jerusalem said, including any future debate on the permanent arrangement. Nevertheless, it is clear that this is not how the map will look in the interim phase, when the IDF's deployment in Judaea and Samaria will be much broader.

This map will not be presented to the ministers at tomorrow's cabinet session on the interim arrangement. [passage omitted]

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Rothschild: Resignation Not Due to Policy

TA0612062094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Negotiations resume in Cairo today between Israel and the Palestinians on the interim stage of the peace process. Two working groups will discuss IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in Judaea and Samaria and Palestinian elections.

A member of the Palestinian delegation, Dr. 'Azmi al-Shu'aybi, said the Palestinians have grave concerns over Israel's willingness to implement the agreement. He praised Major General Dani Rothschild, the outgoing coordinator of activities in the territories, and expressed the fear that his resignation as Israel's chief negotiator is a further sign that Israel is not anxious to make progress. [passage omitted]

Maj. Gen. Dani Rothschild says he is resigning from the IDF for personal reasons. The general has clarified his resignation is not connected in any way with policy differences. Rothschild has been heading Israel's negotiating team with the Palestinians, which resume today in Cairo. Prime Minister Rabin had tried to dissuade Rothschild from resigning and had offered him several other positions. Gen. Rothschild plans on beginning a career in business.

Compensation for Jordanian Property Owners Viewed

TA0412150794 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Dec 94 p 6

[Report by Tova Tzimuqi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Justice Minister David Liba'i will soon discuss with senior officials in his ministry the possibility of compensating Jordanian absentee owners who fled Israel for Jordan in 1948.

Over the weekend, it became known that Jordanian civilians plan to turn to the Custodian of Absentee Owners' Property in the Treasury to have their property, located all over the country—but especially in Jerusalem, Yafo, Nazareth, Haifa, Ramla, Lod, and 'Akko—be returned to them or to be properly compensated .

A senior judicial official said yesterday there is no doubt that the peace agreement with Jordan will require providing adequate compensation to Jordanian civilians who fled.

Shmu'el Toledano, who in the 1970's was chairman of the committee to free absentee owners' property in the Prime Minister's Office, said yesterday: "Israel has said many times that when peace comes it will be prepared to pay compensation for abandoned property, but it will raise demands over the property of Jews who lived in Arab countries and lost it when they came to live in Israel." Toledano made it clear that with Jordan the claims would not be based on mutuality since Jews did not have assets there.

Toledano also said that the problem is that 50 years have passed since the War of Independence and many of the absentee owners have died. Their children are mainly dispersed among the Arab states. Therefore, Israel will only give heirs living in Jordan their shares and will not pay heirs living in Syria, Iraq, etc.

Toledano said the system for working out the compensation is as follows: Property transferred to the State of Israel in 1948 is now worth more therefore compensation will be based on the value of the asset in 1956, in addition to interest from then to the present. According to Toledano, it will take several years before the owner or his heirs prove their ownership. "I believe that the claims will be deliberated between eight and 10 years before the first claimant is compensated. Israel will also be able to claim that it cannot absorb the cost of handing out all the compensation at once.

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Damascus Radio Reports al-Hindawi Resignation

JN0512204294 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Reliable Jordanian sources today said that Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister Dhuqan al-Hindawi has officially tendered his resignation from the government to protest the government's poor performance on the domestic level.

In a letter of resignation he presented to Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, al-Hindawi said he agreed to join the current government in January at the request of King Husayn which was conveyed to him via Jordanian Crown Prince Hasan when he visited him at his house for that purpose. He added that he accepted that mission in view of the difficult phase which Jordan was passing through at the time and which required the pooling of efforts to confront the challenges of the peace process.

He noted that he tried to use his position to introduce a qualitative change for the better in the domestic conditions. The government, however, did not take his views and proposals into consideration to face the deteriorating domestic social and economic conditions. He said that now he does not want to be responsible for any government decision and is, therefore, tendering his resignation.

The same sources said that Education Minister 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah is a candidate to assume the duties of the deputy prime minister until a new government is formed. Several reports have said that a new government will be formed in the near future.

Al-Hindawi Explains Resignation

JN0612132994 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 6 Dec 94 p 4

[Report by Faysal al-Shubul]

[FBIS Translated Text] "I will not go back on my resignation for any reason and regardless of the price because I cannot pursue my work within a trend that does not serve the national interest." This is how resigning Deputy Prime Minister Dhuqan al-Hindawi responded to a question from AL-ASWAQ in a meeting at his house yesterday evening.

Al-Hindawi said: It was neither wise nor responsible to tender my resignation before accomplishing the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which is an important national accomplishment. I would have then left room for gossip here and there. However, it is no longer possible for me to continue in a position of responsibility and not be able to practice it in a manner that serves the important national causes which we all should tackle with responsibility.

He said: There is no personal reason behind the resignation and Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali is the first to know this.

Al-Hindawi added: It is illogical for the government to spread hopes among the people and not seek to fulfill them or at least forge a minimum concept of how to address the pressing national issues.

He went on to say: The government performance has become unbearable and I have endured a great deal before reaching my decision to resign from it.

In his resignation letter, al-Hindawi said he was forced to announce before his colleagues the ministers that he was not convinced of or satisfied with the continuation of this "trend that is harmful to the country and its interest."

In his resignation letter, he referred to the cabinet session held on Saturday, which was the direct reason for his resignation.

AL-ASWAQ has learned form government sources that Saturday's cabinet session witnessed a confrontation within the Council of Ministers. The session also revealed the ministers' desire to know the government plans for the next stage.

The sources said 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, minister of state for cabinet affairs and education minister, was the one who started the dialogue when he asked Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al- Majali if he had a vision or broad lines for the post-peace treaty stage on the local level.

Dhuqan al-Hindawi then spoke. He said that when he enters the Parliament he fears the deputies will ask him questions he cannot answer, especially in the absence of the prime minister.

The sources added that the majority of ministers asked similar questions and conveyed to the cabinet questions posed to them by the deputies and ordinary people.

There are conflicting reports on the details and the wording of the remarks made. One report said the surprise came when the prime minister replied to all remarks by saying: "Let the Parliament topple us if it does not like our work."

The ministers tried to repeat their questions, but the prime minister did not answer them. This prompted Dhuqan al-Hindawi to say he is unable to work in this manner, which lacks the minimum degree of government clarity.

Al-Hindawi left the cabinet meeting before the end of the session. Some ministers tried to convince him to withdraw his resignation, but he left for his township of al-Nu'aymah after turning in the keys of his state-owned vehicle after the session.

Some deputies considered al-Hindawi's resignation an important event, especially at this time when the government is preparing to present its financial policy, the

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1995 state budget, to Parliament—a budget which faced parliamentary opposition before it was referred to Parliament.

Ministers cited the prime minister as saying that he will amend or reshuffle his cabinet after the endorsement of the budget.

Al-Hindawi's resignation and its impact on the future of the government were the topic of discussion all day long yesterday by ministers, deputies, and politicians.

Al-Hindawi's resignation will become effective only after approval by a royal decree, based on the prime minister's approval. [passage omitted]

Disagreements Cited in al-Hindawi Resignation

JN0612102094 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 6 Dec p 1, 7

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The future of Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali's government hung in the balance yesterday as Deputy Prime Minister Dhuqan al-Hindawi submitted his resignation, citing disagreements in the Cabinet over international policies after the signing of the peace treaty with Israel.

His Majesty King Husayn, who returned from London yesterday, could reject Mr. al-Hindawi's resignation and ask him to stay on until such time when the Cabinet can be reshuffled or changed altogether. The King, on the other hand, could accept the resignation upon recommendation by the prime minister and order an immediate reshuffle, minor as it may be. The third possibility is naming a new government, either headed by Dr. al-Majali or a new prime minister.

The last option is less likely, analysts say, since Jordan will be hosting for the next few days the Netherlands' Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus, and because the current government has to see the 1995 budget through Parliament before its mandate runs out.

Officials contacted by the JORDAN TIMES said they were surprised by the timing of Mr. al-Hindawi's resignation but did not wish to comment any further. But a former Cabinet member who spoke to the JORDAN TIMES yesterday speculated that by making his decision to resign now, Mr. al-Hindawi wanted to speed up an expected decision by the Palace on the future of Dr. al-Majali's government.

This view was shared by some other politicians and observers, although all agreed that no final decision would be made until the King has had time to consider the options available to him.

In his letter to the prime minister, Mr. al-Hindawi said his unhappiness with the government's performance stemmed from its socio-economic and administrative policies that have been "shrouded in cloudiness and lack of achievement..." before and after Jordan signed the peace treaty with Israel.

"(Therefore)...I find myself unable to continue participating in the government." Mr. al-Hindawi, 67, wrote in his resignation letter, a copy of which was made available to the JORDAN TIMES.

The move is likely to hurt the government of Prime Minister al- Majali in this month's debate in Parliament on the controversial 1995 budget for which he needs solid backing in the 80-seat House.

Mr. al-Hindawi wrote in his letter to Dr. al-Majali that he considered government policies "damaging to the country and its interests."

Mr. al-Hindawi, a member of the Upper House of Parliament, joined the Cabinet along with 17 ministers, in a major reshuffle on June 8 this year.

Dr. al-Majali's government has faced increasing charges by politicians of curbing freedoms, including banning anti-peace treaty demonstrations, and lacking clear financial and economic policies. Others accuse it of nepotism.

Dr. al-Majali was widely thought to be contemplating a limited Cabinet shuffle this year or in early 1995, to remove at least one minister, Muhammad Thunaybat, who opposes some articles of the treaty with Israel.

Mr. Thunaybat, a minister of state, is close to Jordan's Islamic Action Front Party, the largest part in Parliament and a strident opponent of peace with Israel.

Officials said that even if Mr. al-Hindawi's resignation was accepted, Dr. al-Majali could go on without a government change until Parliament endorsed the budget later this month.

Mr. al-Hindawi did not attend a Cabinet meeting Monday, part of which was chaired by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, to discuss his recent trip to several European Union countries and the situation in Bosnia.

The June reshuffle, the second in Dr. al-Majali's government since he took office in May 1993, was aimed at forming what observers then called a politically strong government in light of the growing parliamentary opposition to the peace process.

The reshuffle at the time was hailed as a "break-through" since Dr. al-Majali convinced members of the house to serve on his team.

Observers at the time said Mr. al-Hindawi, a former deputy prime minister and Chief of the Royal Court, was a "strong politician with a clear agenda who enjoyed support and respect at the Lower House."

According to those observers, Mr. al-Hindawi would have played a key role in running the internal affairs of the government while Dr. al-Majali would have been mainly involved in handling the Kingdom's foreign policy and the peace process.

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Sources close to the government, however, told the JORDAN TIMES that Mr. Hindawi's resignation "was only a manifestation of his frustration for not going up the ladder," as the future prime minister of the upcoming government.

"He is only trying to undermine the government before he exits," maintained an official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Following is a JORDAN TIMES' translation of Mr. al-Hindawi's letter of resignation: Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, Greetings,

On Sunday June 5, 1994 His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan honoured me with a visit and conveyed to me His Majesty King Husayn's desire that I should serve as a minister in your government.

I immediately responded favourably to the King's wish, considering it an order which I should not hesitate to accept, and for which I should assume the responsibility given the prevailing circumstance when Jordan was involved in the battle of peace to regain its full sovereignty and rights.

When I took the oath to be part of the Cabinet I was fully aware that a minister is a partner, sharing the responsibilities of government and has to participate in the decision making process, to defend the government's position and to implement its resolutions even if his own views conflict with those of the government at the time when the decision was taken.

I have adopted this philosophy through my long experience as a participant in past governments for more than a quarter of a century.

I have always considered His Majesty King Husayn as a pioneer, a guide and a good example, steering the country towards truth, noble values and national pride.

Since my joining the government its two main concerns have been the peace negotiations and internal affairs.

With all the complexities they entail socially, economically and administratively, and because the negotiations have been going on in reassuring channels, under direct Royal supervision, the internal affairs of the country have remained the sole responsibility of the government in general, and yours and mine as a deputy premier in particular.

While the peace process went on smoothly and rapidly, resulting in Jordan regaining its sovereignty over its land and water, the internal affairs remained shrouded in obscurity.

Many of the tasks remained undone and government performance was poor, despite all the sincere but fruitless attempts exerted to put matters right.

On the domestic front attempts were made so that matters would go right, running parallel and in harmony with the peace process, giving it more strength and enabling it to be forceful and effective, and under all circumstances to fend off dangers resulting from any possible deterioration in the internal social and economic situation.

The futility of my attempts to rectify the internal situation was most clearly manifested at a Cabinet meeting held Saturday December 4, 1994 when remarks made by my colleagues and myself concerning internal matters went unheeded, which forced me to declare before my colleagues that I was unconvinced and unsatisfied to pursue this line of government policy which I consider damaging to the country and its interests.

For this reason I find myself unable to continue participating in the government and may I take this opportunity to express gratitude to my beneficiary King Husayn, the builder of this country and the example that I always strive to emulate. May I credit him for all that I have achieved and wish him a long and happy life.

I also express deep appreciation to Crown Prince Hasan for his continued directives to me under various circumstances and conditions.

I seize the opportunity to express my cordial and brotherly feelings and deep respect to Your Excellency wishing you and my colleagues every success.

Please accept my utmost respect,

Signed,

Dhuqan al-Hindawi,

5.12.1994

Al-Majali Defuses Crisis in Ties With Syria

JN0512144194 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 5 Dec 94 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali was personally engaged throughout last week in easing a sudden crisis in Jordanian-Syrian relations.

Prime Ministry circles told AL-MAJD that the crisis, which to begin with was low-key but prone to exacerbation and explosion, emerged following the statements made by Minister of Information Jawad al-'Anani two weeks ago to a number of Jordanian and Israeli papers. Syrian circles held that these statements assaulted and cast doubt on the Syrian policy and that they had even assailed leading Syrian figures in a manner that would strain Amman-Damascus relations. Furthermore, these statements have prompted the Syrian media to react with statements equal to and even more violent than those of al-'Anani.

These circles added that Dr. al-Majali, who was informed of the Syrian "regret", responded to the Syrian reaction and asked al-'Anani to deny or at least amend these statements. This led the latter to issue a loose,

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rather general press clarification, which the Syrian circles did not deem a denial or amendment of the previous provocative statements.

Prime Ministry circles added that al-Majali was once again convinced of the Syrian viewpoint, which was relayed to him through diplomatic channels. He then asked his information minister, who was in Geneva, to give a clear and specific statement explicitly denying his controversial statements and noting that the press had distorted the statements he gave.

Thus, the crisis was contained and defused. The minister gave a statement as requested by the prime minister, who assigned one of his aides to put the Syrian Embassy in Amman in the picture of the situation and to ask the Embassy to convey his regards to the "brothers" in Syria together with his eagerness to develop Jordanian-Syrian relations or at least keep them as they are and prevent any deterioration.

Cabinet Issues Statement on Bosnia-Herzegovina

JN0512181794 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1525 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Statement issued by the Council of Ministers; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 5 Dec (PETRA)—The Council of Ministers has followed the serious and rapid developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and discussed the various statements made by international officials. The most recent of these is a statement by Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary of Britain which is currently the president of the European Union and a NATO member, on the possible withdrawal of the European forces participating in the UN peacekeeping forces in the Balkan region.

The Jordanian Government has stressed that the withdrawal of these forces will have serious effects on developments in the crisis and will also escalate tension and fighting in that region. This, in turn, will waste more innocent lives and expand and escalate the fighting to the point where it would be difficult to stop the war.

Jordan believes in democracy and political pluralism and in the need to replace fighting, wars, and violence with dialogue and negotiations. Hence, the government urges all peace-loving forces and the United Nations to focus their efforts on sparing bloodshed and containing and diffusing the war so that it would not escalate.

Jordan, which is participating in the UN peacekeeping forces through the elite of its Armed Forces and Public Security Forces, is extremely concerned about securing protection for these forces and the safety of their members and officers and about providing them with a suitable atmosphere to continue performing their distinguished duty with honesty, neutrality, total dedication, sincerity, and military efficiency for as long as circumstances allow.

The Jordanian Government, guided by the stands of His Majesty King Husayn—the supreme commander who is always concerned about every Jordanian everywhere—believes that this stage requires reason, logic, and a swift move to spare the blood of innocent people who are falling victims of international conflicts that may not serve their interest in the first place.

The Jordanian Government which is monitoring developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has instructed the Foreign and Interior Ministries, in coordination with the Armed Forces and Public Security Department, to become acquainted with the situation and adopt measures that will ensure protection for the forces there and to be in continuous contact with the international establishments and concerned governments in order to become acquainted with developments and to participate in whatever can prevent an escalation and bring the crisis to an end.

The Jordanian Government emphasizes that the continuation of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, its possible spread to other areas in the Balkans, and the reactions that may take place, may affect the conditions of Muslims in Western Europe, which number 6 million. The Jordanian Government will continue its contacts with the European countries to ensure the rights of all Muslim and Arab minorities in Europe and to ensure their continued positive participation in the countries where they live, and to render coexistence, dialogue, and tolerance among peoples and religions successful all over the world.

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Prime Minister al-Hariri Calls Off Resignation

NC0512160394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1600 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 5 Dec (MENA)—The MENA correspondent in Damascus has learned that Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri called off his resignation today following his meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. [passage omitted]

Birri, al-Hariri Return From Talks in Damascus

NC0512181294 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1738 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri returned to Beirut this evening. They refused to make any statement.

A tripartite meeting among President al-Hirawi, Chamber Speaker Birri, and Prime Minister al-Hariri will be held at the B'abda palace tomorrow.

Al-Hariri Makes Statement

NC0512192294 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1900 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Statement by Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri "following his return from Damascus"; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Speaker Nabih Birri and I held a series of meetings with the Syrian leadership in Damascus, which culminated in a meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad, with whom we reviewed in detail the developments in the situation and the requirements of this phase on all levels. The internal situation in Lebanon was reviewed during these meetings.

Speaker Birri and I are expected to meet with President Ilyas al-Hirawi to complete the consultations that we began before my visit to Damascus. In light of this meeting, a statement on the results will be broadcast to the Lebanese public.

Al-Hirawi, al-Hariri, Birri Discuss Damascus Talks

NC0612091694 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi met Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at the Republican Palace in B'abda from 0920 until 1010 today. They were then joined by Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri.

The three leaders are assessing the outcome of the talks held in Damascus yesterday involving Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, Birri, and al-Hariri.

Paper Examines Reasons for al-Hariri Resignation

MM0512162594 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 3 Dec 94 p 3

[Report by Muhammad Shuqayr: "The Disagreement is With Birri. My Integrity is on the Line, and the Resignation is not Aimed at Damascus"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Beirut—Several weeks ago Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri began to feel, more than at any other time in the past, that he was in political chains and that there were those who wanted to close in on him and prevent him from doing anything in the face of the haphazard attacks he was being subjected to.

Sources close to Prime Minister al-Hariri say that the impression he formed was not a result of the abnormal atmosphere which pervaded the last two cabinet sessions held at the Republican Palace in B'abda, because he was not directly involved in the arguments which occurred between ministers although some sparks did fly in his direction. The prime minister felt that his options were limited and that a continuation of the situation as it was and of the atmosphere prevailing within the executive authority would certainly lead him into a minefield. So, the evening before last, he went to Damascus and met with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and told him what was on his mind and how he could no longer take any more affront to his integrity, noting the unwarranted personal attacks on him by people from within who were supposed to put solidarity and harmony above everything else.

AL-HAYAH has learned that Khaddam urged Prime Minister al-Hariri to wait and to be patient. They agreed to resume their talks after his return from China and from Casablanca. The prime minister took the Syrian vice president's advice. According to his visitors, he emphasized that he was facing a difficult situation and that, if it were up to him, he would give up the premiership and give others the chance to succeed, putting on the spot those who had organized one attack on him after another. The visitors said that Prime Minister al-Hariri was faced with difficult options which left him no alternative but to resort to the "negative solution" and resign. He knew that if the choice was between remaining in power while his dispute with Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri continued or going home to Quraytim and staying away from the problems, he would not hesitate to stay home.

According to political sources, al-Hariri was not happy that there were those who wanted to "push" him into a position of resigning of his own accord, so he quickly turned the tables on those who had made preparations not just to weaken him personally but to undermine the state and the regime. They added that the prime minister had not contemplated resigning, at least not at that particular time, days before the arrival of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in the region, because he did not want to give the wrong impression. But the others gave him no chance despite his prolonged patience. He became convinced that there was a plan to oust him, which was contrary to the Syrian view advocating cooperation. The sources say that al-Hariri's resignation surprised them because he had emphasized that he would not expose the country to a shock whatever the cost and would not recreate a situation which in the past had caused him to stay at home. "The negotiations

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necessitate that we cooperate, and I do not want any problems, particularly if that coincides with Christopher's return to the region. Neither we nor Syria need any shocks now; but am I the problem? If I am, then they caused it." [passage omitted]

The prime minister told his visitors: "I was not avoiding the political developments ensuing from the peace negotiations. The resignation was not aimed at Damascus, which is preparing to receive Christopher. The government participated in the negotiations, and I do not believe that we are facing any problems in that respect. No decisive results have been achieved yet to warrant claims that the aim of the resignation was to embarrass Syria. We and Syria are in the same position in the negotiations and we insist on coordination and consultation. The resignation should not be misinterpreted."

Talking to his visitors, Prime Minister al-Hariri drew attention to the existence of a problem with Speaker Birri, saying that Minister Abu-Hamdan's attitude reflected that problem. "As housing minister, he does not act on his own. He told me more than once that his attitude reflected the position of the chamber speaker." *[passage omitted]*

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Al-Asad, Clinton Discuss Peace, Christopher Mission

JN0512164494 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received a telephone call last night from U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Talks dealt with the peace process and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's upcoming mission in the region.

Secretary of State Christopher Arrives in Damascus

JN0612104194 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1000 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In Damascus today, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher began his seventh Middle east tour since the beginning of this year in an attempt to reactivate the peace process between Israel and Syria.

Immediately upon his arrival at 1130 local time today, Christopher went to the Presidential Palace to meet with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad.

Christopher is scheduled to leave Syria this evening and will return to it Thursday morning. He will hold talks with Israeli officials tomorrow, Wednesday. He will also meet with Palestinian National Authority President Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza.

Al-Asad Receives Christopher

JN0612122594 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received at the People's Palace at 1200 today U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, accompanied by Dennis Ross, general coordinator of the peace process; Martin Indyk, official in charge of the Middle East at the U.S. National Security Council; and Christopher Ross, U.S. ambassador in Damascus. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Walid al-Mu'allim, Syria's ambassador in Washington. [passage omitted]

Al-Asad Meets With Lebanon's Birri, al-Hariri

JN0512165094 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Nabih Birri, Lebanese Chamber of Deputies speaker, and Rafiq al-Hariri, Lebanese prime minister, at 1300 today.

The meeting was attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam.

Talks dealt with a number of issues dealing with situation in the region and the peace process. Developments in Lebanon were also discussed.

Birri and al-Hariri briefed the president on the talks held between them in an atmosphere of high responsibility and eagerness to preserve Lebanon's interest and stability, and cooperation between its constitutional establishments.

The president expressed satisfaction with the positive results they reached, and stressed Syria's continued support for Lebanon in everything that ensure stability and security for Lebanon and the liberation of the Lebanese land occupied by Israel.

Commentary on 'Ordinary' Relations With Israel

JN0512154194 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: During the last two days, Israeli officials have increased their statements that focussed in particular on the Syrian track of the peace process.

However, any observer following this flow of statements will be unable to ascertain what is going on in the Israeli political arena. This is because some of these statements were generally pessimistic, some were optimistic, others were neither pessimistic nor optimistic, and most of them were ambiguous and contradictory.

Nevertheless, the common theme in all these statements is the insistence on ignoring the subject of a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, and even defining the extent of withdrawal. Yitzhaq Rabin is unable to pay the price of peace, but he wants Syria to define its concept of peace and the price it will pay for realizing this peace. Peres is optimistic about the possibilities of peace with Syria, but he refuses to accept Syria's conditions. Syria's conditions, about which he speaks, are full withdrawal from the Golan. As for [Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister] Yosi Beilin, he announces that Israel rejects offering new concessions to Syria. These strange Israeli statements conflict with logic and reason. When Rabin speaks about the price of peace that Israel cannot pay, he speaks about the Syrian land under Israeli occupation. So how can he bargin over land that that does not belong to him? When he asks Syria to define its concept of peace and the price it will pay for this peace, he is ignoring the substance of the Syrian position, which Syria has always declared, and which President Hafiz al-Asad announced during the Damascus summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton. However, if Rabin means knowing the area of the Golan that Syria will relinquish in return for peace, then the answer will never change. Syria adheres to every iota of its national soil, and will never cede this right regardless of the passage of time. If the peace Israel wants means relinquishing one iota of the Golan, then the status quo is better than the peace which the Israelis demand.

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When Syria announced that it is prepared to meet the peace requirements and for ordinary relations ['alaqat 'adiyah] with Israel in return for peace, it was aware of what it was saying. Naturally, ordinary relations ['alaqat 'adiyah] does not at all mean preferential relations ['alaqat tafdiliyah] and giving Israel the most-favored-nation status [sifat al-dawlah al-awla bi al-ri'ayah] as it suggests in its conditions for establishing peace.

Moreover, where is this optimism of which Peres speaks as long as the Israeli position continues to be the same? Where are the Israeli concessions that Beilin alleges and rejects giving more of? For more than half a century, Israel used to speak of its desire for peace and was able to convince the international public opinion of these claims. Israel managed to distort facts and to portray the Arabs as people who seek war and who want to drive Israel into the sea. After direct negotiations began between Israel and the Arabs, Israel sought, and is still seeking to evade real peace based on justice.

We have no doubts that the world now is aware of the reality of the Israeli position that is hostile to just and comprehensive peace. The best evidence of this are these statements [by Israeli officials] that only seek to obstruct the international efforts, led by the U.S. efforts to realize peace based on the principles on which the peace process was launched in Madrid three years ago.

For its part, Syria emphasizes anew its honest desire to achieve just and comprehensive peace. As President al-Asad said, Syria did not lose hope, but the Israeli side should first abandon its negative behavior and engage effectively in the peace process. Secondly, the U.S. sponsor should put an end to this Israeli disregard of the dearest objective of the people of the region—the objective of just and comprehensive peace. Otherwise, this objective will remain a far-fetched dream.

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Afghanistan

Political Parties Hopeful for Peace

LD0412233794 Tehran IRNA in English 2219 GMT 4 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 4, IRNA—Representatives of eight leading Afghan political parties have gathered here since November 30 under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) [ICO] to end the 30-month-long civil war raging in Afghanistan .

The Afghan Mojahedin who successfully ousted the communist regime of General Najibullah, have unfortunately turned their guns on each other, bringing ruin and destruction to the country.

Based on reports released by the United Nations at least 23,000 were injured and 7,000 others killed since clashes broke out between the partisans of President Borhanoddin Rabbani and Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar in January 1994.

The warring factions have attended a number of sessions in Herat and Jalalabad in Afghanistan and in the Pakistani city of Peshawar but to no avail because of the absence of certain other Mojahedin groups and their non-commitment to the agreements reached.

Jamiat-e-Eslami [Islamic Society], Islamic Revolution Movement, Mahaz Melli, Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party], Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Revolutionary Movement], Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], National Islamic Salvation Front and National Islamic Movement of Northern Afghanistan are the major Afghan parties attending the negotiations underway in Tehran.

Representatives of Yunes Khales' Hezb-e Eslami and the Ettehad-e Eslami [Islamic Union] of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf are absent from the conference.

The parties have so far held five rounds of indirect talks here at the Foreign Ministry behind closed doors.

Member of the Supreme Afghan State Council and Rabbani's special envoy to the talks Seyyed Hoseyn Alemi Balkhi told IRNA on Sunday that he was satisfied with the trend of talks to restore calm to his country.

Balkhi said his party agreed with generalities of OIC peace proposal.

OIC has called on the Afghan Mojahedin to agree to a three-month ceasefire to restore tranquility in Afghanistan, form an interim government for a period of six months to one year and hold free parliamentary elections.

Meanwhile spokesman of the Afghan Coordination Council Mohammad Karimi Khalili called as "satisfactory" Tehran peace talks.

Khalili told IRNA that he is participating in the talks with full authority.

Four Afghan parties, including Wahdat-e Eslami, Hezb-e Eslami, National Islamic Salvation Front, and National Islamic Front for Northern Afghanistan, formed a coalition against Rabbani immediately after new rounds of clashes which broke out on first January.

Khalili said they welcomed and supported proposals offered by the OIC to restore peace to his country.

He added that his council would do all it can to make Tehran conference fruitful. Khalili pointed that the so-called Supervisory Council and Sayyaf's Ettehad-e Eslami even ignored Rabbani's signature put in Jalalabad and Islamabad agreements on ending the clashes.

The representative of Mahaz Melli in a brief talk with IRNA assessed as "positive" the ongoing talks and expressed hope that the belligerent sides would reach agreements.

Rival Groups Agree to Four-Day Cease-Fire

LD0612113594 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghanistan's rival groups attacked each other's positions in Kabul again. According to radio Kabul, seven people were killed and 12 were injured after yesterday's clashes.

Reports from Afghanistan also say that the warring groups in Afghanistan have agreed to observe a four-day cease-fire in Kabul so that aid convoys could get through. The cease-fire started today and will continue until Friday [9 December].

UN sources have told the leaders of the warring groups in Afghanistan that if medicine and food does not reach Kabul, hundreds of civilians will die.

Iran

Christopher Trip Termed 'Absurd Exercise in Futility'

LD0612112894 Tehran IRNA in English 1051 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 6 IRNA—A morning English-language daily here Tuesday [6 December] commented on the shuttle diplomacy of the U.S. secretary of state, Warren Christopher, to the Middle East and called it as an "absurd exercise in futility" as long as it excluded the Palestinians from any efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East.

TEHRAN TIMES in its editorial referred to Christopher's trips between Syria and Israel, started today, to bring about a peace between the two Middle East neighbors on the issue of the Golan Heights which has been occupied by the Zionists since the 1967 six-day war.

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But the fact remained that real peace in the Middle East did not begin and did not end with the Arab countries such as Syria, said the paper noting that peace in the Middle East "begins and ends with the Palestinian nation."

If Christopher and others were interested in peace, they must begin with Palestinians whose refusal to go along with the so-called 'peace process' has meant its failure, said the paper.

It argued that the turbulent situation in the occupied Palestine wondered Israelis whether the PLO had sufficient clout to stop the rampant armed resistance. [sentence as received]

Referring to the western reports which said that Gaza has been "Lebanonized," and has turned into a land "divided into different turfs, with rival militia groups vying for supremacy and hegemony," the article added that the reports were "false in that there is hardly any rivalry between the Islamic groups" and that they are not vying for power and hegemony.

Reiterating that without Palestinians there can be no peace, the paper noted in conclusion that the shuttle diplomacy may impress the world and perhaps some naive heads of state in the region, but it could never be "a good replacement for facing the truth that Palestine belongs to Palestinians."

Chinese Ambassador on Ties, Nuclear Plant Aid

LD0412151094 Tehran IRNA in English 1303 GMT 4 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, 4 Dec (IRNA)—Chinese ambassador to Iran, Hua Liming has stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran can play a significant role in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

Speaking to the English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' published Sunday [4 December], he said Iran's vast land area, population, rich cultural heritage and economic might are the essential ingredients which demand that the Islamic republic play such a vital role.

Commenting on recent U.S. moves in Asia under the pretext of what Washington calls a 'peacekeeping role', the ambassador stressed that the U.S. request for such a role has been turned down by major countries in southeast Asia.

"Gone are the days when one country could dictate its policies on another," the Chinese ambassador remarked.

Referring to Tehran-Beijing relations as 'very good', he noted, "we have a 2000-year history of political, cultural and commercial relations through the ancient silk road."

A number of common factors draw Iran and China closer, he said adding that the two countries see a mutual need for each other and sincere relations in all fields are necessary to accomplish this need.

Iran-China trade was recorded at just dlrs. 50 million before the victory of the Islamic revolution in 1979, the ambassador noted adding that, after the revolution, trade steadily increased until last year when it stood at dlrs. 730 million. "Chinese-Iranian cooperation is concentrated on non-ferrous metals production, copper, lead, the establishment of the petrochemical plant in Orumiyeh and the Tehran metro," he announced.

"Right now we are engaged in talks with the Iranian Government for the construction of two nuclear power plants for peaceful purposes," the daily quoted him as saying.

According to the memorandum of understanding signed in China in 1992 during President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's visit there, China is to put up two nuclear power plants for Iran with a capacity of 300 megawatts each.

Hua, denouncing the foreign propaganda directed against Iran's plans to build nuclear power plants, said, "there are hundreds of nuclear power plants in the world and many in the United States."

The hue and cry against Iran's plans to build nuclear power plants is nothing but a distortion of the facts, the ambassador concluded.

Official To Visit Kuwait 'Very Soon'

LD0312171194 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1410 GMT 3 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, 3 Dec (KUNA)—'Abdallah al-Duwaykh, Kuwaiti ambassador to Iran, met with Mohammad Hashemi, under secretary at the Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry, here today. They reviewed bilateral relations and the situation in the Arabian Gulf region.

In a statement to KUNA, diplomatic sources said that Under Secretary Hashemi has accepted an official invitation addressed to him to visit Kuwait for talks with senior officials at the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The sources added that Hashemi will visit Kuwait very soon within the framework of his Gulf tour, and will meet with his Kuwaiti counterpart Sulayman Majid al-Shahin. They pointed out that al-Shahin and Hashemi will head a meeting of the joint Kuwaiti- Iranian committee which convenes every six months. The last meeting was held in Tehran during al-Shahin's visit last year.

The sources stressed that Hashemi's scheduled visit to Kuwait reflects the common desire of the two countries' officials to strengthen bilateral relations in all spheres through activating the work of the joint committee.

Reaction to West's Draft Resolution on Human Rights

Report Called 'Bunch of Lies'

LD0412153894 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 4 Dec 94

[Unattributed commentary]

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[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN-member Western countries have once again prepared a draft resolution on the basis of Galindo Pohl's unrealistic reports on the human rights conditions in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The draft resolution is to be presented before the third committee of the UN General Assembly. In the said draft resolution, the earlier claims about such matters as the violation of women's rights, incompatibility of the judicial laws with the international standards, maltreatment of prisoners, and non-observance of the rights of the religious minorities have been repeated as examples of the human rights violations in Iran.

Those who have prepared the draft resolution have eventually asked the Islamic Republic of Iran to allow a UN special envoy to visit Iran to reveal the human right situation and accord him necessary cooperation.

There is no fresh point in Galindo Pohl's recent report which, as in the past, this time too has been confirmed by certain Western countries. But the said report leaves no doubt that West's influence in the UN affiliated bodies, such as the human rights commission, continues to remain strong.

A glance at the Islamic Republic of Iran's cooperation with the human rights commission in the past confirms the point that Iran has never had second thoughts in offering its cooperation to the international human rights organizations and their representatives who observe the principle of truth and independence in their reports prepared without having any prejudgement.

It was actually as a result of such cooperation that Mr. Galindo Pohl was able to visit Iran on more than one occasion. The UN special envoy's visits to Iran must have made the point clear to him that claims regarding the human rights violations in Iran are quite unfounded, as Mr. Galindo Pohl in his first report to the UN human rights commission had made this point abundantly clear.

But unfortunately the performance of the human rights commission and the resolution of its 48th session in 1992, which is considered as a departure from its previous performance and tone, led the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop its cooperation with the commission and not take part in the preparation of the commission resolutions.

Presently too, in view of the substance of Galindo Pohl's recent report, in which undocumented claims have been made, it should be said that the report by no means reflects the realities and facts that are present in Iran and the report contains many weak points and is a biased report.

At any rate, as the country's prosecutor-general, Mr. Moqtada'i, has announced, the Islamic Republic of Iran is willing to cooperate with the representatives of the international human rights organizations interested in conducting unbiased review without making any prejudgement in order to prove that Galindo Pohl's reports are nothing but a bunch of lies.

Islamic Viewpoint of Rights Defended

LD0512214894 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1557 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Special representative of the Commission for Human Rights [UNCHR], in his latest report, has prepared the draft of a resolution that once again repeats his claims about the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The draft mentions previous claims on the violation of women's rights, the non-conformity of judicial laws to international standards, and restrictions to the freedoms and rights of religious minorities. [passage omitted]

It should be noted that human rights from the viewpoint of Islam differs completely from materialistic viewpoints in the West. Many of the rights that are permitted under the label of individual and sexual freedoms—creating social and ethical crises in societies there—are considered as offenses under Islam's sacred laws. This is not something that is limited to Iran but holds true currently in all Islamic countries. Within the dimensions of social and political freedoms it should be said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has held more general elections than any other country. Iran's parliament has been continuously active in the past 16 years and never have general elections been postponed, not even during times of war.

Regarding the social rights of women, it should be added that women make up 25 percent of white-collar workers, and the percentage of literacy among women has increased from 48 percent, just after the Islamic Revolution, to 71 percent in 1368 [1989]. Forty-four percent of voters in the last general elections [Spring 1992] were women, and there are presently nine deputies in the Majles. Compared to parliaments in other countries of the regions, this is unique.

As to the violation of the rights of religious minorities mentioned again in the UNCHR's report, minorities are freely practicing their religious rites on the basis of Article 13 of the Constitution. They also have representatives in the Majles, and they have a large number of churches, synagogues, and chapels as well as teaching centers where they conduct their religious and educational activities. This is while the 2 million strong Muslim minority in Britain and the 4 million Muslims in France are barred from sending their own deputies to parliament. The truth is that in the past 15 years, the attitude of organizations claiming to protect human rights toward Iran has been shaped by political considerations. And so the concept of human rights has been vastly used to advance the interests and satisfy the greed of influential countries—notably America—in the United Nations.

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In spite of this, the Islamic Republic of Iran is still prepared to cooperate with representatives who adhere to the principles of honesty, independence, and impartiality in preparing their reports, and who assess and examine the concept of human rights in terms of its compatibility with traditional cultural and religious viewpoints of Islamic societies.

German Delegates' Accusations Viewed

NC0212133694 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 16 Nov 94 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "Galindo Pohl—In a New Guise"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last week a session was convened for three days at the Foreign Ministry's office of political and international studies under the title "The joint seminar of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Federal Republic of Germany on human rights issues." The reports on this session—as in the case of similar, earlier ones on studies and research that pursue specific political objectives—were compiled by the participants themselves and were disseminated by telex and fax and published in newspapers and carried on radio and television. The people did not understand what had transpired at the seminar and nor did the media officials!

Perhaps it may be asked: Why were such reports disseminated in this manner? What deliberations took place on principle? If the people and the media did not understand what happened at the session, then who did?

These questions are all justified and demand clear answers. But, before this, let us cast a cursory glance at the information received regarding this session and peruse the list of topics so that in this manner we can alleviate our curiosity regarding such gatherings and obtain answers to questions that arise. The following information has been indirectly obtained, but from reliable sources:

—The members of the participating German delegation were all experienced in human rights issues.

—The German side insisted that the Islamic Republic of Iran should permit the representatives of the so-called human rights organizations to contact those they consider "political prisoners."

—The members of the German delegation insisted on defending those who were in prison on charges of spying for foreigners or having links with them and in particular mentioned Amir Entezam and Sa'idi-Sirjani by name.

—The punishments that are meted out in the Islamic Republic of Iran on the basis of Islamic injunctions, such as executions, corporal punishment, amputation of limbs, and condemnation on charges of apostasy, were objected to by the German delegation, who called for revoking these punishments and implementing international regulations instead of Islamic injunctions.

—The German side accused Iran of using torture.

—The German delegates also expressed support for the renegade Baha'i sect and they called for permission for this colonialism-spawned sect to operate freely in Iran.

—Freedom for women to wear what they wish, especially foreign women resident in Iran, freedom to be secular and the need to segregate religion from politics were issues stressed by the German delegates.

—The German side claimed that there was a lack of freedom of the press in the Islamic Republic of Iran and referred to a letter disseminated recently by some so-called Iranian writers.

—The German delegation objected to the approval of the bill banning satellite [dishes].

—The Germans also expressed their vehement support of the liberals [preceding word in English], mentioning some by name, and accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of exerting pressure on them.

—The German side also insisted that the Islamic Republic of Iran should permit those Christian women who marry Muslim Iranian men to bring their children up in their own religion.

—While expressing its vociferous criticism of the performance of the Islamic Republic of Iran in issues of human rights, the German delegates proposed that representatives of the UN Human Rights Commission should be allowed to visit Iran and supervise the revolutionary courts in particular.

As can be seen from the above, instead of the German delegation participating in the seminar and embarking on a legal and investigative discussion and compiling information on human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, it entered into recriminations, interference, and objections with regard to our country's internal affairs and behaved like a creditor!

An examination of the key points propounded by the German delegation confirms that it participated with specific political motives in the seminar and assumed the same assignment as that of Galindo Pohl.

Our esteemed leaders are certainly aware that Galindo Pohl visited Iran as the UN Human Rights Commission rapporteur and revealed his obvious intentions in the course of his assignment by disseminating false reports. After two visits to Iran, he was banned from visiting our country by our government. The main point of the remarks by the German delegation is in fact resuming where Galindo Pohl left off and is a continuation of the same biased reports.

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The fact is that the United Nations, which is a puppet organization of the powers of world arrogance, should be interrogated by a revolutionary nation and the system that has resulted from such a revolution on why it is a tool in the hands of the United States and all the diabolical powers. Accordingly, permitting the UN representative to assess the human rights situation in our country was a mistake right from the outset. Now that this error has been rectified halfway through, why are people like Galindo Pohl being permitted to remonstrate and criticize the Islamic Republic of Iran's system in another guise!

This action by the Foreign Ministry's institute of studies is being strongly questioned, especially since the Iranian side's participation in this seminar was such that it did not have the necessary capability and motivation to take a revolutionary approach toward the German side. Most importantly, when the ulterior motives of the West under the deceptive appellation of "human rights" are quite clear, why does the office of studies convene such gatherings?

The answers to the questions regarding this seminar that were mentioned in the beginning of this article should be addressed by those that sponsored it. In any case, if the office of international studies considers these get-togethers useful, we deem it necessary to present the following suggestions that will reduce the negative fallout from them:

1. Newspaper correspondents should be invited so that they can compile their reports freely and inform the people of the deliberations.

2. The Iranian delegates to such gatherings should be chosen on the basis of their record of revolutionary thinking and serious motivation for defending Islamic and revolutionary values so that they can provide precise answers to dispel the doubts voiced by the other side.

3. The cassettes of the speeches and debates at such gatherings should be disseminated to newspapers so that the texts and the newspapers' critiques can be published.

As a practical step, JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI hereby expresses its willingness to print the complete text of the debates from the gatherings at the office of studies in the Foreign Ministry if the latter provides the appropriate recordings.

Only 'Impartial' Rights Inspectors Allowed Entry

NC0412113094 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 4 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran will only permit the representatives of international human rights organizations to visit on the condition that they are impartial.

Prosecutor-General Moqtada'i stated yesterday that the Islamic Republic of Iran is always willing to cooperate with representatives of international human rights organizations—other than Galindo Pohl—who wish to inspect the conditions in Iran without any preconceived notions.

He added: When Galindo Pohl the UN Human Rights Commission special rapporteur prepared a biased report on Iran at the behest of the powers of world arrogance and aberrant groups, he was refused permission to re-enter Iran and to continue his work.

Kuwait 'Deplores' Western Human Rights Attitudes

LD0512142194 Tehran IRNA in English 1332 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 5, IRNA—Iran and Kuwait have deplored the "selective" attitude of certain Western human rights organizations towards Muslim countries and their policy of silence towards the massacre of Bosnian Muslims by the aggressor Serbs.

Iran's Ambassador to Kuwait Gholamali San'ati and director general of International Organizations Department at Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, 'Abd al-Hamid Awadhi on Sunday [4 December] also called as "necessary" cooperation and coordination between Iran and Kuwait in the international and regional organizations and assemblies, especially the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the United Nations.

In another meeting on Sunday, San'ati and deputy minister of science and higher education Dr. Rasha al-Sabah discussed the exchange of professors and college students, cooperation between Iranian and Kuwaiti higher education ministries and setting up of camps for college students.

Western Media Said 'Openly Hostile' to Country

NC0512163994 Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian 29 Nov 94 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "The Pen and the Sword"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The sudden demise of Sa'idi-Sirjani provided material against Iran for the pernicious Western mass media. Most of BBC's items during the past 24 hours in its Persian services were devoted to this issue and, in ascribing his demise to the Iranian Government, thereby characterizing this normal incident as a new chapter in the continuing suffocation and lack of freedom of expression. In his article titled "The Pen and the Sword," Fred Halliday drew a spiteful analogy between certain despotic regimes during Iran's contemporary history, putting the Islamic Republic of Iran in this category. He has stated that Iran's rich literature and writers have always campaigned against despotism and now it is the pen that has emerged mightier than the sword; thus insinuating that Sa'idi-Sirjani's demise falls within this context.

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There is no doubt that this vindictive action by the BBC, which has been followed up by other Western media, indicates the extensive efforts to capitalize on every incident in order to tarnish the cultural visage of the Islamic Revolution and to create an unwholesome atmosphere in the country, even though it is quite clear that the untimely demise of Sa'idi-Sirjani was a normal and usual occurrence.

We have frequently observed similar incidents and issues, and we know full well that the foreign media are openly hostile toward Iran and are waiting for any opportunity to capitalize on. Such experiences should motivate us to ponder over a way of approaching such issues. Unfortunately, our mass media, especially the radio and television, which could play a combative role, have a unilateral and inert stance. This creates conditions conducive to the breeding of such a venomous atmosphere by the veteran media such as the BBC.

Change in Russian-U.S. Relations Seen

NC0212141294 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 23 Nov 94 p 2

[Editorial: "The Growing Rift Between Moscow and Washington"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It seems that Russian policy toward the United States is undergoing a change. At the end of his six-day visit to France, Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev told Moscow's Channel-4 television that there was no need for Russia and France to rely on Washington. He was quick to add that there were no conflicts between the U.S., Russia and France.

He also said that Russia, France and Britain will establish a unanimous voice, influential enough to resolve the problems of countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq. The statement by Kozyrev points to the existing differences with the United States at the international level which are the direct result of the U.S. policy of seeking world hegemony.

As an example of differences between the U.S., Russia and France, Kozyrev said that the positions of France and Russia regarding Iraq were identical, whereas the U.S. had a different position. Kozyrev said that, despite positive changes in Iraq's position, the U.S. was not ready to change its policy toward Iraq. The three members of the Security Council, Russia, France and China have all held a position on Iraq which differs from the position held by the U.S.

At the same time Kozyrev was visiting France, Viktor Chernomyrdrin, the Russian premier, was visiting the Persian Gulf region. The fact that Russia is becoming active in the Middle East shows that Russia follows an independent policy in this region. The visit to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait by Chernomyrdrin, and his discussion with the Saudi authorities in order to lift the economic sanctions against Iraq, point to the independent policies of the Russia in this region.

Russia is interested in playing up the European alliance against the United States. It is a fact that the U.S. does not favor this new European alliance, especially since after World War II, it tried its best to keep Europe as its ally in its fight against the former Soviet Union.

What is certain is that Russia feels that the era of following the U.S. has come to an end and that its own survival, as a power, requires initiative and plenty of effort.

Russia also feels confident that it can become the power that it can be. It also seems more profitable for Russia to create partnerships with European and Far Eastern countries, rather than with the United States. U.S. hegemony has never been, and will never be, acceptable to major world powers and so far we have seen plenty of examples of this rejection of U.S. adventurism and warmongering in places like Haiti and Iraq.

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